Finding Meaning in the Masses: Issues of Taste, Identity and Sociability in Digitality

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, and the research contained herein is of my own composition, except where explicitly stated in the text, and was not previously submitted for the award of any other degree or professional qualification at this or any other university.

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Melissa K. Avdeeff, 17 April 2011

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the development of sociability within digitality, through an examination of three primary relationships: people and music, people and the Web 2.0 and people and each other. Mobile digital devices, such as the iPod, represent the convergence of musical taste and the internet. Both are inherently social, and, while critics have accused mobile digital devices as being socially isolating, the youth in this study have demonstrated an environment in which this technology is used as a means of communication. For these digital youth, such technologies are seen as a gateway to communication and the sharing of experiences. Having grown up fully immersed in digitality, these youth are negotiating new relationships with technology and each other, through the perceived invisibility of the technology.

An important aspect of this research is the formation of identity and taste in digitality. Music is an integral facet of identity, a means to relate to others and form judgments on those we meet – but how is this affected by digitality? The internet encourages a loss of genre distinction, and a culture of eclecticism, whereby people can listen to a multitude of genres, often without knowing what exactly they are listening to, and without aligning their identities with specific genres or subgenres. Based on empirical data, it is demonstrated that this fragmentation of taste matches an intensified fragmentation of identity through social networking sites.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been quite a journey.

To begin, I would like to thank my supervisor, Simon Frith, for his wisdom and encouragement. Thanks to Peter Nelson, my second supervisor, for helping to make my thesis more streamlined. For their interest and excellent comments on my research, thanks to my examiners, Nick Prior and Tia DeNora.

Throughout the past four years I've had incredible support from friends, family, and colleagues in Edinburgh and abroad. I thank you all, wholeheartedly.

This thesis would not be possible without the massive amount of people who filled out my survey and took part in the interviews. The way in which respondents talked about their emotional connections with music was particularly inspiring.

A special thank you goes out to Grete Steen-Henriksen, the best editor and mom anyone could hope for.

<3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

At its most basic level, this thesis is about relationships. More specifically, it is about how we organise social relationships within our current cultural environment, which is defined by, and is defining digitality. Technology and media, two processes essential to digitality, are explored as to how they are impacting the creation of taste, identity, and sociability. As humans, our identity is complex and multifaceted, but through our tastes we show others aspects of who we are. The ways in which we form relationships with media, technology, and each other, is interrelated and in constant flux. This thesis explores these relationships, with a special focus on the media that is music, something which has not yet been explored within the concept of digitality.

I came to this topic primarily through an interest in music. Academically, and personally, I have always been interested in why people listen to music, what they are listening to, and how they go about sharing the listening experience with others. As well, new media technologies have always caught my attention, so this project allowed me to combine these interests into a large-scale research project, which looked at the role of technology in social relationships and musical taste.

The project originally started with a focus on the iPod, as a representation of all MP3 players, and how the use of this technology could potentially be impacting genre definitions and canon formations. Early on in my research, there was a shift away from genre definitions as the main focus, but it does guide the discussion on the eclecticism of taste encouraged by digitality in Chapter 1.4: Musical Taste and Identity: A Culture of Eclecticism.

After reading Michael Bull's various works on mobile music culture[1], especially his phenomenological account of iPod culture in *Sound Moves*, I found that it was the *culture* of the iPod, and its place in the current cultural landscape and affect on musical taste formation, that were of importance, not only to me, but to the study of contemporary society. I also felt there was a need to focus on those listeners

[1] Michael Bull, *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Michael Bull, 'No Dead Air! The iPod and the Culture of Mobile Listening,' *Leisure Studies* 24.4 (October, 2005): 343-355; Michael Bull, 'The Seduction of Sound in Consumer Culture: Investigating Walkman Desire,' *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2.1 (2002): 82-101; Michael Bull, *Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2000).

who were ignored by Bull – the rural user. While Bull's work illuminates *how* people are using mobile and musical devices and technologies, he was neglecting *what* people were listening to, as well as the social potential and impacts.

While Bull does not directly claim that the iPod is a socially isolating device, much of mainstream press, especially around the time of iPod's release in 2001, focused on the iPod in this way. Here was a device that allowed you to listen to music in private, while in a public setting. For some, this meant that you were shut off from the 'outside' world, enclosed in a personal bubble, without awareness of your surroundings. In casual observation, I had noticed that this was not always the case for most users, especially younger users. Many people were sharing headphones, engaging in conversation with one earbud in place and the other one removed, or plugging their devices into external speakers for listening en-mass.

These diverse interests converged into a project with a much broader scope than originally anticipated. What came to be is an examination of *digitality*. Originally conceived by Negroponte in his book, *Being Digital*, to mean the act of 'being digital', or living in a digital culture while using digital technologies[2], I have appropriated the term to include all aspects of digital culture. Technology appears to be a driving force behind much of today's social engagements, whether it be mobile phones, email, social networking sites, or iPods. I became interested in the interactions between people and devices and the sequential social evolution. Negroponte's definition of digitality does not include music, but I use it to define contemporary society, giving it a broader meaning.

I was keen on exploring these themes empirically, through a large-scale survey and interview dataset[3]. From a musicological standpoint, empirical research is lacking in the field, so I drew on sociological and music-psychology studies, in order to guide my methodologies. To gain quantitative information on taste and identity formation, I distributed a survey online through social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace, as well as forwarding schemes through email and academic mailing lists. A large number of responses came from posts on blogs via David Hepworth, editor of Word magazine, and Leander Kahney, editor of Wired

[2] Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995).
[3] See Appendix I for a summary of methodologies.

Magazine (US). Demographical information about the respondents can be found in Chapter 1.1: Taste and Everyday Life.

The survey was broken down into five sections, which can be found in full in Appendix II. The survey started by asking respondents basic demographic information, such as date of birth, location, occupation, etc. The bulk of the survey was a check-box style questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert-style rating system, asking how often respondents participated in a variety of activities, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), as well as a sixth category, Don't Know. Four sections contained activities: (1) everyday leisure activities, such as 'going to the cinema', 'playing sports' and 'creating arts/crafts'; (2) musical activities, such as 'listening to music', 'playing an instrument', 'listening to music alone', and 'listening to music with friends'; (3) internet activities, such as 'using email', 'using social networking sites', 'downloading music'; and (4) MP3 player activities, such as 'using an MP3 player while travelling', 'change music on MP3 player', 'use MP3 player as storage device'. A fifth category focused on genre preference, where respondents were asked to respond, on the same 5-point scale, how often they listened to music from a list of 86 genres.

The survey was influenced by a number of music psychology studies, which attempted to correlate leisure activities with musical tastes, or demographic information with tastes. The work of North and Hargreaves was particularly important in the creation of this survey[4].

The qualitative interview section of the dataset was primarily acquired online, via a follow-up email sent to survey respondents who provided an email address. In-person, small-group interviews were also conducted at two high schools,[5] as there was difficulty reaching this age group online. The online interview presented seven statements which respondents were asked to react to. This allowed for respondents to respond in any manner they wished, expanding on topics as they felt the need, without merely answering 'yes' or 'no'. The topics covered reflected those in the survey, and can be found, in full, in Appendix III. The qualitative research was

[4] Adrian North and David Hargreaves, 'Uses of Music in Everyday Life,' *Music Perception* 22.1 (2004): 41-77.
[5] Lakes District Secondary School in Burns Lake, BC, Canada and Prestonpans Secondary School in Edinburgh, UK.

guided by more sociological studies, such as Tia DeNora's, *Music in Everyday Life,*[6] and Michael Bull's, *Sound Moves*[7]. While Bull's methodologies are quite transparent in his work, he provided me with a copy of his online interview questions as a point of reference. The way in which DeNora, in particular, used quotes from respondents was useful in guiding the way in which I incorporated mine as well. I felt that it was important to give a voice to the individual, while still determining trends and defining aspects of digital culture.

The empirical data guided the results and writing of this thesis. Although the topics covered in the survey and interviews appear quite broad, they have been divided into three main sections: I: Music and Everyday Life: Issues of Taste and Identity; II: The Internet: Communication and Information; and III: iPod Culture and Concepts of Sociability. I argue that music and the internet are both inherently social devices, and have become entwined in iPod culture[8]. They also impact taste and identity formation and exhibition, and together, promote an eclecticism of taste and fragmentation of identity, as discussed throughout the thesis. While the connections between music, taste and identity are well documented, the use of the internet and social networking sites to portray an outward expression of identity, is less researched, but nonetheless important.

The iPod becomes a symbol of the relationship between music, the internet, taste, and identity. It is what brings music into the study of digitality.

[6] Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[7] Bull, *Sound Moves*.
[8] It is important to note that although I use the term 'iPod' throughout, I intend for the term to stand for all MP3 players, regardless of brand.

PART I: MUSIC AND EVERYDAY LIFE: ISSUES OF TASTE AND IDENTITY

1.1: TASTE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The concept of music in everyday life has previously been broached from a variety of methodological standpoints, including sociologically, psychologically, and philosophically. Interestingly, studies conducted from a sociological standpoint have acquired the most cultural cachet and the most influential results – most notably, Pierre Bourdieu's examination of taste within French society in *Distinction*[9], and more recently, Tia DeNora's ethnographic study of women and music in everyday life[10]. Psychological studies of music, through quantitative data, have also yielded various dissertations on taste and music preference, such as Adrian North and David Hargreaves[11], who explored everyday life and the potential for a correlation with musical taste. Their definition of everyday life is taken to mean leisure activities. North and Hargreaves' work stems from an affirmation put forth by Bourdieu in that taste, both musical and activity-related, is a marker of social class, and it is through our socio-economic status that we construct our habitus[12].

In order to discuss everyday life adequately, its definition should be addressed. Before taking the issue of music into account, this chapter will explore the concept of 'everyday life' and how it relates to participation in leisure activities. I take as a starting point the concept that everyday life, or culture, is the normality of existence. Raymond Williams has defined culture as *ordinary*, or as constructed out of everyday existence. Culture, or everyday life, is not 'out there.'[13] As Williams has noted, culture is defined by the masses, sharing common meanings and activities or, in other words, the commonalities between us[14].

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[9] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
[10] Tia DeNora, *Music In Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[11] Adrian North, David Hargreaves and Jon Hargreaves, 'Uses of Music in Everyday Life,' *Music Perception* 22.1 (2004).
[12] Throughout this paper I refer to the 'habitus' in the Bourdieusian sense. For Bourdieu, the habitus is the filter through which we see and define ourselves in the world. It is our acquired dispositions, usually influenced by social class, through which we perceive the world.
[13] See also: Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage, 1995); Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996).
[14] Raymond Williams, *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981).

This chapter will address how these commonalities are situated within digitality.[15] With Bourdieu's study correlating taste to socio-economic status, we have to question whether this is still relevant in digitality, which promotes an eclectisization, or democratisation, of taste. As geographic boundaries become less defined, because of the speed and ease of communication on the digital information highway, the concepts of taste and, in turn, everyday life, are affected. To start, a presentation of the demographical information obtained from the respondents will be presented, followed by a review of the literature in the field, and results from the current study. In the results section, leisure activities will be examined in correlation to gender, age, marital status and occupational status before exploring how the participation in particular leisure activities corresponds to musical taste.

Demographics

In order to address the social indicators used to determine everyday life, the survey used in the current study contained a series of questions about background demographical information, including: location, gender, age, education, marital status, and occupation. The breakdown by geographic location was quite varied, with the majority of the respondents, approximately 89%, being located in Canada (n=351, 28.2%), the United Kingdom (n=319, 25.7%), or the United States (n=432, 34.7%). One might expect that the diminishment of geographic boundaries, through online blogs, social networking sites and mass emailing, might have provided a wider distribution of survey results, but regardless, the survey did reach 44 countries. Table 1 shows the breakdown by country:

[15] Digitality here is a re-appropriation of Negroponte's use of the term. Here, it implies digital culture as everyday, contemporary Western society.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Country

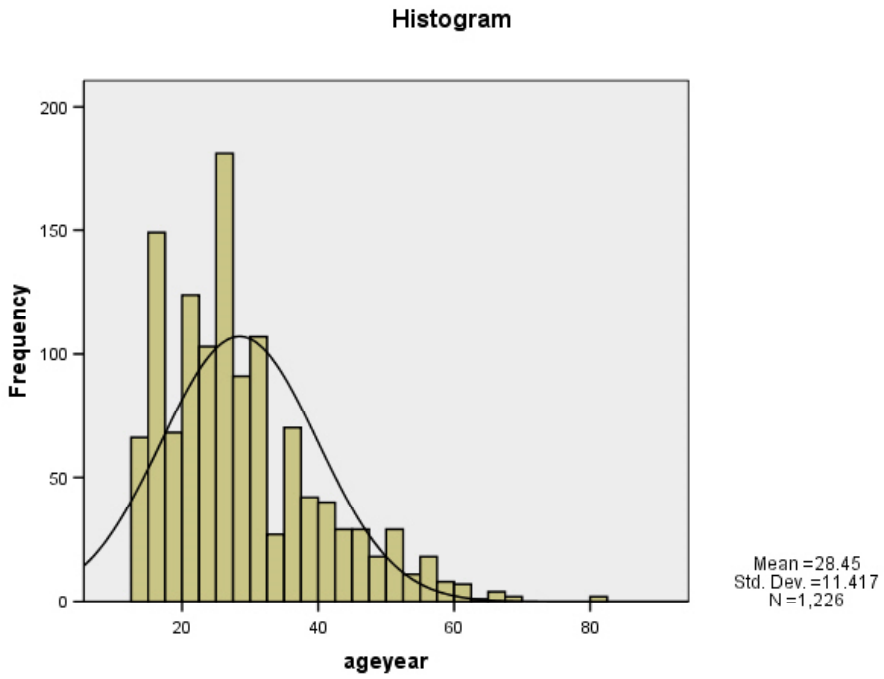
Country	Number of Respondents	Percent
United States of America	432	34.754630
Canada	351	28.238130
United Kingdom	319	25.663720
Australia	26	2.091714
N/A	8	0.643604
Germany	7	0.563154
Spain	7	0.563154
Philippines	6	0.482703
Mexico	5	0.402253
Norway	5	0.402253
Brazil	4	0.321802
Finland	4	0.321802
France	4	0.321802
Japan	4	0.321802
South Africa	4	0.321802
The Netherlands	4	0.321802
Austria	3	0.241352
Chile	3	0.241352
Croatia	3	0.241352
N.Ireland	3	0.241352
New Zealand	3	0.241352
Portugal	3	0.241352
Serbia	3	0.241352
Belgium	2	0.160901
Denmark	2	0.160901
Iceland	2	0.160901
India	2	0.160901
Italy	2	0.160901
Latvia	2	0.160901
South Korea	2	0.160901
Sweden	2	0.160901
Switzerland	2	0.160901
Taiwan	2	0.160901
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0.080451
Botswana	1	0.080451
Colombia	1	0.080451
Indonesia	1	0.080451
Israel	1	0.080451
Luxembourg	1	0.080451
Malaysia	1	0.080451
Netherlands	1	0.080451
Romania	1	0.080451
Slovenia	1	0.080451
Turkey	1	0.080451
Uruguay	1	0.080451
Total	1243	100

Although digitality, and its subcategory of iPod culture, can be conceived as a global phenomenon, these results yield a predominantly Western, or First World perspective. Unfortunately, demographics on iPod ownership are not readily available, but one could assume that it has become fairly widespread. The survey for this project found that on a 5-point scale, respondents reported using MP3 players/iPods with a mean frequency of 4.2. As with technological and societal changes, though, the First World tends to be the catalyst, with others inevitably following. The focus on First World results, therefore, gives an overview on the inception of iPod culture and the potential for future development, both within these countries, and eventually, further afield.

In regards to gender, there was a fairly decent balance: males 51.8% (n=642); and females 47.9% (n=596). Issues of gender differences will be discussed throughout the thesis, when they are statistically significant.

The age range of respondents was 13 to 82, with a medium age of 26, and a mean of 28. Figure 1 shows a histogram of the age range, in relation to the normal curve of a typical population.

Figure 1: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Age/Year



A standard deviation of 11.417 indicates that the respondents' ages are quite spread out. There are a couple of clusters: those in their late teens and mid twenties but, as the medium and mean ages are fairly close, the results show a balanced age range. This allows for a more accurate description of digitality based on age, and will be adequate for discussing generational differences. Table 2 shows the results of ages as broken down into decades.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Age/Decade

	Decade	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-10	283	22.767500	23.083200	23.08320
	11-20	499	40.144810	40.701470	63.78467
	21-30	246	19.790830	20.065250	83.84992
	31-40	116	9.332261	9.461664	93.31158
	41-50	66	5.309735	5.383361	98.69494
	51-60	14	1.126307	1.141925	99.83687
	71-80	2	0.160901	0.163132	100
	Total	1226	98.632340	100	
Missing	System	17	1.367659		
Total		1243	100		

Respondents were asked to select their highest level of education, ranging from some high school to PhD degree. Seeing as the survey was circulated through university mailing lists, the high number of university graduates is not surprising. While these results do not necessarily reflect the general population, they do provide some correlation between education and involvement with digitality. It would not be fair to make the assumption that those with more education are more likely to own iPods, but rather, they are more likely to understand the validity in being involved in this type of research. Table 3 shows the breakdown of education levels.

Table 3: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Highest Level of Education Completed

Education Level	Number of Respondents	Percent
some high school	248	19.951730
high school diploma	60	4.827031
some college	110	8.849558
some university	148	11.906680
college degree	78	6.275141
university degree	200	16.090100
college/university diploma	42	3.378922
some postgraduate	63	5.068383
masters degree	202	16.251010
phd degree	85	6.838294
apprenticeship	7	0.563154
Total	1243	100

With regard to occupational status, as per Table 4, the highest number of responses was for employed full time and full time student:

Table 4: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Current Occupational Status

Occupational Status	Number of Respondents	Percent
employed full time	501	40.30571
employed part time	85	6.838294
student full time	488	39.25986
student part time	25	2.011263
unemployed	54	4.344328
between jobs	18	1.448109
self employed	58	4.66613
retired	14	1.126307
Total	1243	100

The majority of respondents (n=725, 58%) indicated that they were single. Table 5 shows distribution by marital status, across the whole survey. With a large proportion of respondents being under the legal age for marriage, though, Table 6 provides the results for current marital status, as broken down between those under the age of 18 and those aged 18 and over. This should provide a more realistic look at marital status.

Table 5: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Current Marital Status (total)

	Current Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percent
Valid	single	725	58.326630
	married	271	21.802090
	separated	15	1.206758
	divorced	32	2.574417
	engaged	32	2.574417
	live with partner	133	10.699920
	widowed	4	0.321802
	Total	1212	97.506030
Missing	System	31	2.493966
Total		1243	100

Table 6: Demographic Information of Survey Respondents: Current marital status (divided)

	Current Marital Status	Unknown Age	13-17	18-82	Total
	single	13	204	508	725
	married	2	3	266	271
	separated	0	0	15	15
	divorced	0	0	32	32
	engaged	0	2	30	32
	live with partner	1	4	128	133
	widowed	0	0	4	4
Total		16	213	983	1212

When the cases are split between those above, and below age 18, the results then change to 95.8% (n=204) of those under 18 reporting as being single. For those 18

and over, 51.7% (n=508) report being single, 27.1% (n=266) are married, and 13% (n=128) live with a partner. This would appear to be a more accurate representation of the general population, and provides a good balance of results.

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Of importance is ascertaining whether this background information is a determining factor for taste. According to Bourdieu, age, location, gender, marital and economic status are key determiners of habitus[16], so it needs to be determined what bearing they have on taste, especially as it pertains, in this instance, to leisure activities. Bourdieu has argued that the taste distinctions we make correspond to markers of class. These distinctions are bound to our habitus, or location in culture, which are tied to education levels. For Bourdieu, taste classifies agents and places them into categories of similarity, which are often related to academic capital and socio-economic status. As one's academic capital increases, one's taste should advance past that of the 'popular,' to something more 'highbrow', as it requires more advanced knowledge for its appreciation; but, as with any social process, this is not a guaranteed given. Bourdieu notes that:

> Academic capital is in fact the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission of the family and cultural transmission by the school…Thus, it is written into the tacit definition of the academic qualification *formally* guaranteeing a specific competence (like an engineering diploma) that *really* guarantees a possession of a 'general culture' whose breadth is proportionate to the prestige of the qualification; and, conversely, that no real guarantee may be sought of what it guarantees formally and really or, to put it another way, of the extent to which it guarantees what it guarantees.[17]

For Bourdieu, it was not merely the act of participating in an activity that created a marker of class, but also the perception of the value judgments within said activities. For example, listening to music can be enjoyed by those of any social status, but distinctions arise according to the type, or genre, of music. In Bourdieu's empirical data results, the lower classes tended to prefer what he notes as 'lighter' music, while those with higher academic capital, and the supposed ability to understand high-art works, appreciated highbrow styles more.

[16] Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
[17] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 23-25

Building on Bourdieu's seminal work, scholars have been keen to incorporate additional social indicators into the taste equation. For example, Tally Katz-Gerro (1999) argues that it is not only class that determines taste, but one must also consider other important social signifiers, such as gender, religion, and leisure activities. As class boundaries are losing agency as prescribers of taste, lifestyle choices become increasingly varied, and free from socio-economic associations. As noted by Katz-Gerro:

> Works in the tradition of Weber and Bourdieu describe the social field as a multifaceted space in which actors are located according to the composition of different types of capital that they can utilize. Social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital are strongly associated with economic capital, or class position, and they maintain and reproduce social location and social standing. Within occupational classes there exists a community of interests, habits, morals, traditions, and ideologies, considerably different from those of other classes… Other works argue that lifestyle pattern may cut across the relationships generated in the labour market. While this view holds that classes and lifestyle groups tend in many cases to be closely linked, through property and economic means, the main argument is that class hierarchies are decomposing, and that class position is less able to explain social dynamics and cultural identities because of the fragmentation of stratification processes.[18]

Katz-Gerro's article explores the declining role of class position as a determinant in social dynamics and cultural identity. Through data from the culture module of the 1993 General Social Survey, she explored 'whether it is possible to identify cultural differentiation that is associated with several other determinants of social differentiation, namely, class, race, gender, and education'[19]. Looking at both leisure activities and musical taste, Katz-Gerro determined that class should not be abandoned as a cultural indicator, as there is a definitive correlation between taste and class. Katz-Gerro believes class should not be the sole indicator of taste, and calls for a combination of indicators, including education and gender. Her research found that education was an important determinant of taste, and that it is:

> More likely that persons with similar education will resemble one another in leisure habits and music tastes – independent of other characteristics – than persons from the same class, race, age, group, and so forth, who have had a different level of education.[20]

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[18] Tally Katz-Gerro, 'Culture Consumption and Social Stratification: Leisure Activities, Musical Tastes, and Social Location,' *Sociological Perspectives* (Winter, 1999): 628.
[19] Ibid., 630.
[20] Ibid., 639.

In regards to education, Katz-Gerro found that those with higher levels tend to enjoy more highbrow, popular, and youth musical styles, and generally engage in more popular lifestyle choices. Addressing these results with socio-economic status, it should be noted that those with higher incomes will undoubtedly have better access to more 'cultured' activities. What often leads to higher incomes, though, are higher education levels; the anomaly is that 'income usually does not cancel out racial, class, and generational effects'[21]. In short, a complementary examination of social determinants in determining taste is ideal, but also difficult to achieve, as stereotypical judgments tend to come into play. Since it is important to recognize social diversity, perhaps we can fall back on Bourdieu's notion of the habitus, one which includes a variety of variables within the overlying notion of class.

For Bourdieu, the habitus extends to the homology argument, whereby social and cultural stratifications map closely onto each other. Tak Wing Chan and John H. Goldthorpe (2007) further examine this argument, as well as the individualization and the cultural omnivore-univore approaches to cultural stratification, in their article, 'Social Stratification and Cultural consumption: music in England.' They use survey data to explore the relationship between social stratification and cultural consumption and, as with Katz-Gerro, argue for a more comprehensive examination of cultural consumption, one that incorporates a wide variety of social variables.

Chan and Goldthorpe, largely guided by Bourdieu's work in *Distinction*, argue that individuals with higher social status tend to prefer and engage in highbrow culture, while those in lower strata are consumers of popular or mass culture. Utilising *habitus* as the key term, one's habitus determines one's cultural consumption pattern. Habitus translates into unity and commonality within each class, in which one follows prescribed cultural norms. The authors note that:

> Rivalry and competition within this order are not to be seen as separate from class divisions and conflict, let alone as serving, perhaps, to inhibit class-based action… To the contrary, the status order is the field of symbolic struggle between classes, in which those involved seek to "classify" themselves and others as same or different, included or excluded, and in which members of the dominant class use "symbolic violence" in order to confirm their superiority of

[21] Ibid., 637.

> their lifestyle by arrogating to it those cultural forms that are generally recognized as "canonical," "legitimate," or otherwise "distinguished."[22]

In other words, those in a higher-class position have the means, and political clout, to define and set the standards for class and cultural consumption. Their class-based preferences would be self-defined as highbrow, which distinguishes their tastes from that of the mainstream. Their tastes, therefore, become elitist, as they must possess the appropriate knowledge to fully understand a piece of work, the income to partake in highbrow activities, and the political will to maintain the separation of classes.

In a review of the individualization argument, Chan and Goldthorpe note that it is in direct opposition to the homology argument and, as such, is a shift away from the habitus as a social determinant, to one based on the freedom of self-realization. Largely based on the Weberian school of thought, the literature[23] argues that, in economically advanced societies, differences in taste and consumption are losing their grounding in social class in favour of self-realization within the individual. The authors note that the variations within the individualization argument fall along a continuum, from those who believe markers such as race, age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation are as important as class in determining taste, to those who hold that individuals are able to fully construct their own lifestyles. I find that the term 'construct' is somewhat problematic, however, as it implies that people are making conscious decisions about their identities, whereas I prefer a more fluid and natural definition of identity-formation. As noted by Chan and Goldthorpe, in what they feel is a more cogent version of the individualization argument:

> Often developed under postmodern influences, lifestyles are seen as now lacking any kind of structural grounding or indeed inherent unity. Individuals are increasingly able to form their own lifestyles independently of their social locations, and primarily through their patterns of consumption and democratisation of taste, to "construct" their own selves more or less at will.[24]

To a certain extent, I agree with the concept of individualisation from a democratising standpoint. The internet, in particular, allows people to explore

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[22] Tak Wing Chan and John H. Goldthorpe, 'Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption: Music in England,' *European Sociological Review* 23.1 (2007): 2.
[23] Z. Bauman, *Freedom* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988); Z. Bauman, *Society Under Siege* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); 1991; A. Warde, *Consumption, Food and Taste* (London: Sage, 1997).
[24] Chan and Goldthorpe, 'Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption': 2.

different aspects of their tastes, without the confines of socio-economic boundaries or the influence of other identity variables. Without the economic means to pursue these tastes in a social setting, however, democratisation can only go so far. I also have to question if people can construct their own identities at will, or if they are merely playing at different roles, while their core identity remains fairly constant. Without the required erudition for exploration, construction of identity, outside a person's habitus, would be limited. To what extent has yet to be determined, but would be of interest for future research.

Chan and Goldthorpe favour, and their empirical research primarily supports, the final argument on the determinants for taste – that of the cultural omnivore-univore – which is premised on empirical research conducted by Peterson and Simkus in 1992. Although not directly linked to leisure activities, the omnivore-univore postulation primarily centres on cultural consumption at its most basic level. The authors describe how this argument considers the homology argument outdated:

> Not because cultural consumption has lost all grounding in social stratification, but because a new relationship is emerging. Rather than cultural consumption mapping straightforwardly onto social stratification, the cultural consumption of individuals in high social strata differs from that of individuals in lower social strata chiefly in that it is greater *and much wider in range* – comprising not only more "high-brow" culture but in fact more "middle-brow" and more "low-brow" culture as well. Thus, the crucial contrast is not that of "snob versus slob" but that of cultural omnivore versus cultural univore.[25]

Essentially, the cultural omnivore-univore hypothesis posits that those with higher levels of education tend to be more *tolerant* and open to cultural styles other than those in which they were originally socialised into. Through self-realisation, those in higher social standings can move past the tastes dictated by their habitus, therefore combining the homology and individualisation theories. That is not to say that those of higher social standing participate in cultural activities in the same manner as their lower social class counterparts, though. Chan and Goldthorpe note that omnivores still maintain exclusivity in their tastes, and strive towards the 'demonstration of cultural *and* social superiority' through 'cultural slumming'[26].

The concept of the cultural omnivore-univore will be discussed further in Chapter 1.2 when dealing with musical tastes, but in regards to lifestyle choices, this

[25] Chan and Goldthorpe, 3.
[26] Chan and Goldthorpe, 3.

argument holds some validity. Although many leisure activities are dependent on financial resources, it is conceivable that individuals who have experienced upward social mobility may retain some lifestyle choices associated with their previous status, because they enjoy them. I think the problem with associating the omnivore-univore theory to lifestyle activities is that it takes away the agency of choice, both in lifestyle, personal gratification and efficacy. The distinction, therefore, should be at the degree of participation. Just as there are social and cultural connotations for different musical styles, distinctions arise within leisure activities. For example, one may see a movie at the cinema, something common to all social groups, but the film genre can often allude to the social status of the viewer. Art or indie films may hold more cultural cachet than blockbuster, romantic comedies or teen films and, ironically, as with musical tastes, there is a perceived elitism, especially when the elitist views a more common movie. The issue I have with these distinctions is that it implies value judgments; that those in the lower classes are somehow deficient, so cannot understand or appreciate cultured art or activities, while higher classes are privileged in all spheres of life. Highbrow does not necessarily equate to better, but those with the cultural cachet, including those in academia, maintain these distinctions. On this issue, North and Hargreaves perceive that 'any given artistic product could be analysed as either "high-brow" or "low-brow", such that theses labels cannot be applied uniquely to particular artistic products or domains'[27].

North and Hargreaves, generally regarded as the leading scholars on the psychology of taste, have conducted research correlating lifestyle activities, musical preferences and social class. Of importance to the current research, as it deals with educational levels and taste distinctions, is their article, 'Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference 3. Travel, Money, Education, Employment, and Health.' The authors note that this issue is often fielded from a Marxist approach to sociology and social psychology. Building on Bourdieu's social class distinctions, North and Hargreaves discerned that more attention must be paid to the everyday consumption of music and its relationship to the actual consumer. In other words:

> Research should address not only the means by which art is produced and legitimized, but also the specific means by which this process manifests itself.

[27] David Hargreaves and Adrian North, 'Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference: 3. Travel, Money, Education, Employment, and Health,' *Psychology of Music* 35 (2007): 477.

> Put simply, which *specific* aspects of an individual's social class background allow them to be differentiated from people with other musical tastes?[28]

Empirical research by North and Hargreaves focuses on the position that, if music is a key means of differentiating between different social groups, then 'it should be possible to quantify a wide variety of correlations between particular musical preferences and various specific lifestyle factors related to socio-economic variables'[29]. Methodologically, their results came from a UK-distributed survey which yielded 2,532 respondents. They examined potential correlations between musical taste and education levels: the amount of travelling one did in a year's time, employment status, and health. While these are all important identity and social status indicators, what becomes problematic is how they define musical tastes. North and Hargreaves asked respondents to choose their 'current taste in music' from a list of 35 genres. The genre list is quite extensive and comprehensive, but respondents were only allowed to choose one genre and those who chose more were excluded from the results. It is difficult to define one's tastes by their social standing, but even more so to define musical tastes by one genre. As is noted in Chapter 1.3, it is extremely rare for people to listen to, or prefer one style of music, no matter how broadly defined. The study attempts to create a complex map of correlations between identity markers, lifestyle choices, and taste, but then falls short with a much too simplistic view of musical distinctions. Fortunately, they quickly address this in their results section, noting that it is problematic to treat fans of genres, such as pop, as a 'single homogenous societal group' and that separate clusters of pop music fans should be addressed in their own right[30].

Keeping this in mind, North and Hargreaves' results indicate that musical preferences do, indeed, correlate with various aspects of the consumer's life. Their data also indicates that while age and income can explain some variations in taste patterns amongst groups, one consistent correlation they found is between taste and the liberal-conservative dichotomy. North and Hargreaves are unique in their use of political and moral values in the positioning of respondents, and it should be noted that the authors imposed these titles, as opposed to being self-disclosed by the

[28] Ibid., 477.
[29] Ibid., 478.
[30] Ibid., 494.

respondents. The authors placed the respondents into either the liberal or conservative category based on their reported lifestyle choices, regardless of personal beliefs.

Key themes, which can be built upon from North and Hargreaves' research, are: (1) class is by no means the primary indicator of taste, we must take into account secondary identity markers, and (2) correlation does not imply causality; we cannot, for example, assume that 'a decision to smoke could arise *because* a person likes blues. Indeed, in practical terms it may prove impossible to disentangle the undoubtedly complex interrelations between the variables discussed here'[31].

Adding to this discussion, Virtanen argues that we must also take into account *time spent* when looking at cultural consumption patterns. She found that different taste patterns emerged when one takes into account how often one is participating in various activities or musical genres[32]. Her research draws heavily from van Eijck's (2000) study, in which he found that educational level was a better indicator of taste than occupational status[33]. Different styles of research have, and will undoubtedly continue to produce varying results as to which identity marker is the 'best' indication of taste. I think what we can take from this is that we need a comprehensive approach to taste formation, and it does not need to come down to *which* indicator is the best, but rather, focus on developing an identity map which looks at the intersections of, and interconnection between identity and taste. As Hennion notes, taste is not:

> An attribute, it is not a property (or a thing or of a person), it is an activity. You have to do something in order to listen to music, drink a wine, appreciate an object. Taste are not given or determined, and their objects are not either; one has to make them appear together, through repeated experiments, progressively adjusted.[34]

Tastes are not formed in isolation, but within the environment, cultural, spiritual and physical, of the consumer. Key identity markers can be *mapped*, but they do not always *determine* taste.

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[31] Ibid., 492.
[32] Taru Virtanen, 'Dimensions of Taste for Cultural Consumption – an Exemplar of Constructing a Taste Pattern,' (paper presented at the 7th ESA Conference, Research Network 'Sociology of Consumption,' September, 2005).
[33] Koen van Eijck, 'Social Differentiation in Musical Taste Patterns,' *Social Forces* 79.3 (2001).
[34] Antoine Hennion, 'Those Things That Hold Us Together: Taste and Sociology,' *Cultural Sociology* 1.1 (2007): 101.

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While it is conceivable that a culture of postmodernism could be attributed to the move away from social class as primary taste determiner[35], I would argue that digitality has solidified this cultural shift. With the increased availability of online information, as well as the agency of people in regards to trying out new activities, whether online or in the so-called 'real world,' there is a sense that anything is possible and accessible. I believe there has been a shift in how we determine our leisure activity options, as the need for downtime is necessary for all socio-economic statuses. The difference now rests on the financial commitment – one can have a ski or golf membership at a five star resort, or the local facility; one can use their own private jet to travel, or go on bicycle, volunteer or working tours – it becomes a matter of creativity and thinking outside the box. There will probably always be those activities or facilities which are the sole proprietorship of the elite, as that helps maintain a sense of power and plays into a culture of consumerism. With digitality, the playing field becomes more levelled, which was shown by the results of my data, as they suggest that *age* has becomes a more reliable indicator of taste than social standing.

As with Katz-Gerro, I find that people can be grouped into generalised categories, as determined by their lifestyle choices, which does not necessarily have any bearing on an individual's socio-economic status. This is not to say that socio-economic status holds no agency in regards to lifestyle preference, but it is not the chief determinant. There has been a shift in the correlation between social capital and lifestyle choices, in which what was once considered an activity associated with low social standing can be enjoyed by all, without the fear of a loss of cultural capital; but conversely, due to financial factors, it remains to be seen if activities previously associated with the higher classes will be equally enjoyed by all. The results of my survey indicate a progression towards this, or cultural omnivorism, but with a caveat – due to financial constraints, the intensity of involvement in higher-class activities would be curtailed.

As for the current study, value judgments on leisure activities were minimized, with distinctions created through general categories that encompassed a

[35] Jim McGuigan, *Modernity and Postmodern Culture: Issues in Cultural and Media Studies* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999)

wide variety of activities. The types of activities used were influenced by Katz-Gerro's sociological study, with the addition and subtraction of a number of key activities[36]. The respondents were asked to indicate how often they partook in each activity on a scale from 1 to 5. This Likert-style rating system ranged from Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Very Often (5), and Don't Know. The list was composed of 25 activities, ranging from those related to sports, to music and the arts. To provide an overview of the activities presented, and the general trends, Table 7 shows the mean frequency of reported participation for each activity, in descending order.

Table 7: Survey Reponses: General Activities (total)

General Activities	N	Mean
Listen to music	1243	4.826227
Read for pleasure	1243	3.918745
Watch TV	1243	3.818986
Watch documentaries	1242	3.427536
Go to the library	1243	3.064360
Attend popular music concerts	1241	3.016116
Participate in outdoor pursuits(hiking/camping)	1241	2.997583
Go to a pub	1148	2.994774
Participate in a sports activity	1241	2.949234
See a movie at the cinema	1242	2.942029
Play a musical instrument	1242	2.917069
Watch a sporting event	1242	2.911433
Visit historical sites	1243	2.576830
Create art	1243	2.550282
Play video games	1242	2.530596
Visit museums	1242	2.447665
Perform music	1241	2.366640
Create crafts	1136	2.325704
Visit art galleries	1240	2.319355
Go to a nightclub	1148	2.193380
See live theatre	1243	2.125503
Attend classical music concerts	1241	2.045931
Garden	1243	2.021722
Compose music	1239	1.938660
Attend a ballet performance	1242	1.503221

As can be seen from the above chart, without adjusting for variables, the respondents indicate high involvement with general activities such as, listening to

[36] See Appendix II for full survey questions.

music (m=4.83), reading for pleasure (m=3.92), watching TV (m=3.82), watching documentaries (m=3.43), going to libraries (m=3.06), and attending popular music concerts (m=3.02). Interestingly, except for attending popular music concerts, the other top-rated activities require little financial commitment. These are activities which can be enjoyed by most people, regardless of social or educational standing. What is of interest is that they are media-related, so the content then becomes more important than the actual activity itself. At the other end of the scale, we find attending a ballet performance (m=1.50), composing music (m=1.94), gardening (m=2.05), and attending classical music concerts (m=2.02), which, except for gardening, are more likely to be associated with education, culture and money. Ballet and classical music concerts, in particular, have a strong association with highbrow culture and, if considered within the cultural omnivore-univore argument, would be elitist omnivores. Looking at Table 7 from an omnivore-univore perspective, the results *do* favour this argument, with the masses enjoying multiple activities with no particular value judgment, and those with highbrow status, engaged in activities that do, indicating their presence amongst the elite. These issues will be explored further in the next section, as these results will be considered against key identity markers: educational level, occupation, gender, age and marital status.

1. Education

The results of the survey indicate that academic class-association, in regards to leisure activity, is disintegrating in a bottom-up process. Tastes and activities previously associated with the less-educated, such as outdoor pursuits and popular music, are now being enjoyed by the masses, regardless of educational level, but the process is less obvious for the opposite. An argument could be made that education potentially positions one in a higher earning job, which would influence participation in activities, although the survey results do not significantly correlate higher education and disposable income with leisure activities. It should be noted that disposable income is a nebulous term, because higher income usually translates into higher housing, food and clothing costs. Education and disposable income do, however, indicate an association with what Bourdieu would term cultural capital. Bourdieu has noted that, in order to appreciate high art, one must possess the

appropriate knowledges, and my results indicate that this belief is apposite to iPod culture.

Once again, I would hesitate in placing value judgments on activities, as it could imply that attending museums and art galleries is better, or more valuable than others, such as playing video games or sports. I also cannot say that knowledge acquired in academia should be regarded as more profound than everyday learning. The Net Generation[37], for example, is constantly adapting to technological changes at a very rapid pace, which leads to new skill sets and knowledges that are self-taught and discovered. These skill sets allow them to interact with their environment and technology in a meaningful and acceptable manner that is quite different from previous generations. The ability to multi-task, the need for immediate communication, and the knowledge to filter an immense quantity of information are a few of the important skill sets developed outside the classroom. The value of understanding an art work, as opposed to how to operate the newest digital device or play a video game, are different, and should not have value judgments placed on them.

To explore education levels and leisure activity participation, linear regression and ANOVA tests were conducted. Table 8 shows the reported levels of education.

Table 8: Highest Level of Education Completed (total)

Education Level	N	Percent
some high school	248	19.951730
high school diploma	60	4.827031
some college	110	8.849558
some university	148	11.906680
college degree	78	6.275141
university degree	200	16.090100
college/university diploma	42	3.378922
some postgraduate	63	5.068383
masters degree	202	16.251010
phd degree	85	6.838294
apprenticeship	7	0.563154
Total	1243	100

[37] See Chapter 2.1 for definition of Net Generation.

Because of its low number of respondents, apprenticeship was subsequently not included in the correlation tests, which allowed for a more accurate linear regression analysis. Table 9 presents the results of the linear regression test (Pearson correlation), that were at least significant at the 0.01 level.

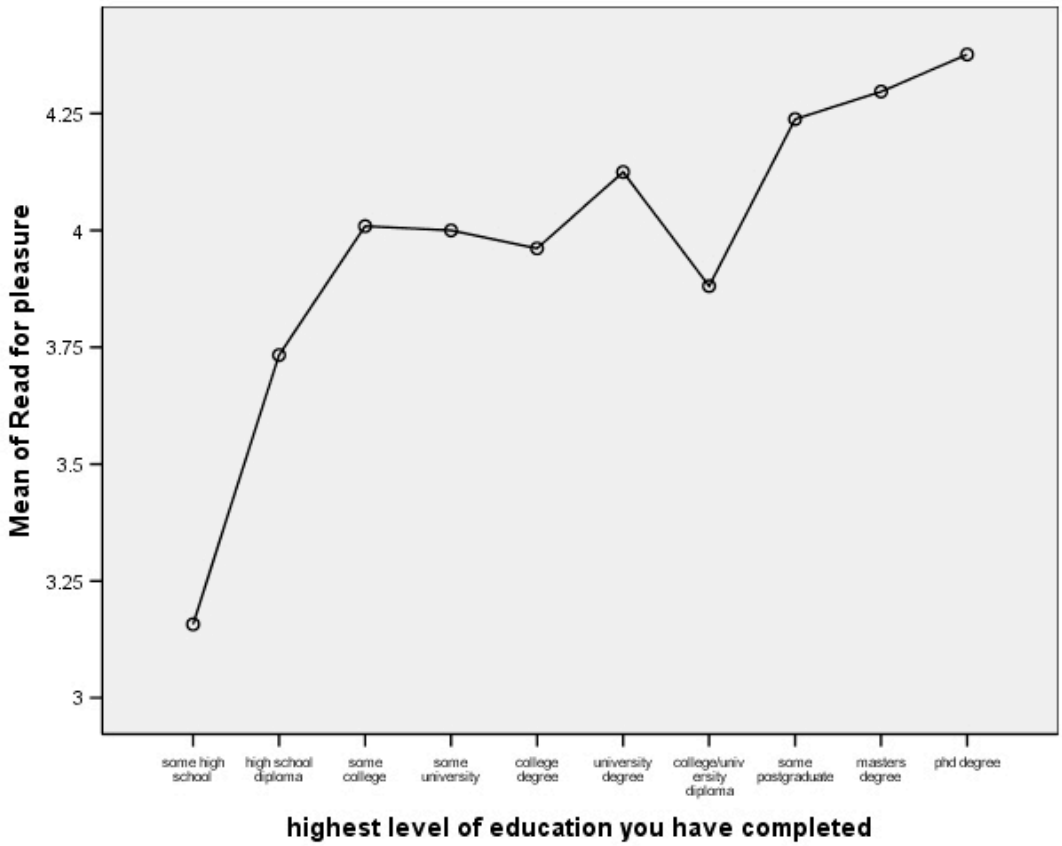
Table 9: Pearson Correlation Test: General Activities / Educational Levels

	General Activities	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Positive Correlation	See a movie at the cinema	.104(**)	0.000255	1235
	See live theatre	.204(**)	4E-13	1236
	Visit museums	.435(**)	4.28E-58	1235
	Visit art galleries	.411(**)	2.58E-51	1233
	Visit historical sites	.335(**)	7.82E-34	1236
	Attend classical music concerts	.245(**)	2.18E-18	1234
	Attend popular music concerts	.179(**)	2.34E-10	1234
	Attend a ballet performance	.175(**)	5.72E-10	1235
	Garden	.191(**)	1.18E-11	1236
	Go to the library	.270(**)	4.92E-22	1236
	Read for pleasure	.285(**)	1.57E-24	1236
	Watch documentaries	.249(**)	7.6E-19	1235
	Go to a pub	.332(**)	7.85E-31	1141
	Go to a nightclub	.137(**)	3.62E-06	1141
Negative Correlation	Play video games	-.276(**)	5.4E-23	1235
	Create art	-.149(**)	1.56E-07	1236
	Create crafts	-.096(**)	0.001308	1129

This test shows that a significant portion of the general activities are, indeed, guided by educational levels. The high significance levels, as opposed to the more modest Pearson Correlation results, indicate that while the two factors are likely to move directionally together, it is not necessarily in a linear fashion. In other words, a peak effect occurs when, as the education level rises, so does participation in an activity to a certain extent, then it may trail off, and then rise again at a higher education level. A good example is the results for reading for pleasure: a significance factor of 1.57E-24 indicates a high level of predicted correlation, but with a Pearson Correlation of 0.285, we cannot expect a straightforward linear

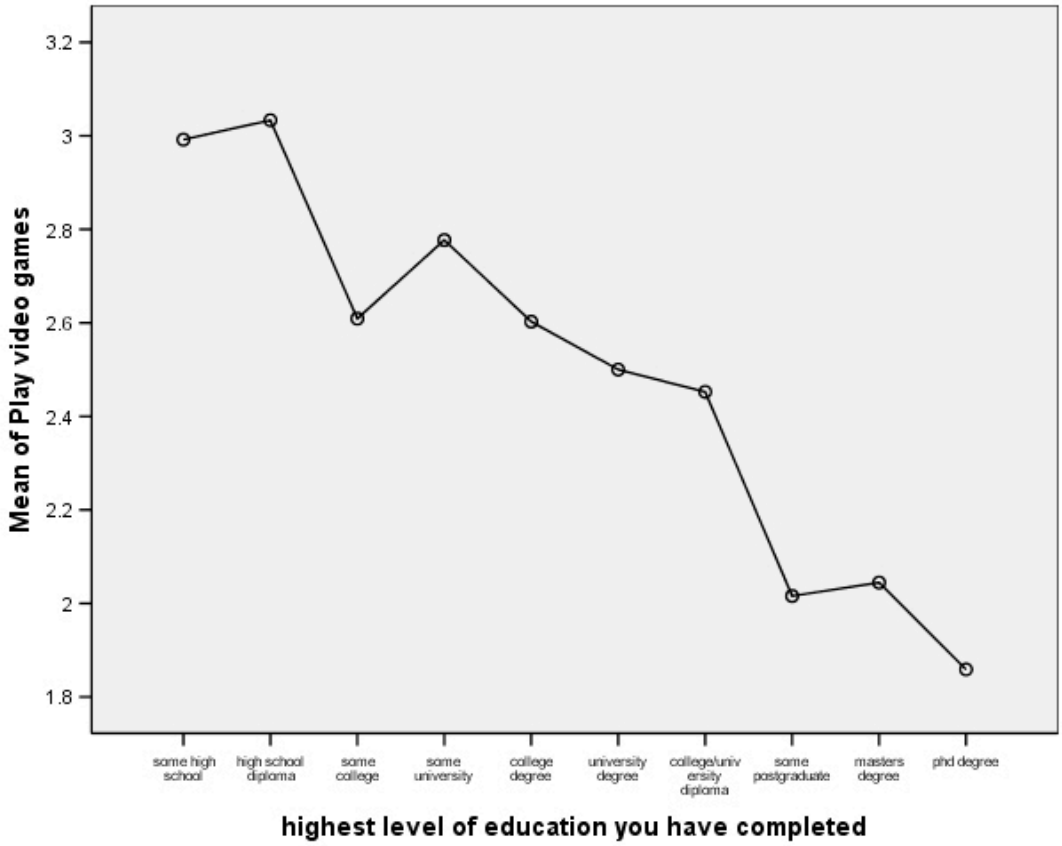
correlation. As we can see from Figure 2, the more education one has, the more likely they are to read for pleasure, with discretion around those who have completed a post secondary degree, or who have completed some post secondary education.

Figure 2: Means Plot: Read for Pleasure Mean Frequencies / Education Levels



The variable 'playing video games,' yielded a mirror result to reading for pleasure, but with a negative correlation. Figure 3 demonstrates the fairly linear correlation, except for minor discretions for those who are high-schooled educated, or with masters' degrees:

Figure 3: Means Plot: Play Video Games / Education Levels



Results that indicated the highest level of linear correlation are: visit museums (Pearson Correlation = .435), visit art galleries (Pearson Correlation = .411), visit historic sites (Pearson Correlation = .332), and go to a pub (Pearson Correlation = .332). These results indicate a high probability of correlation (stronger linear correlation) between variables, as well as likelihood to be partaken by those who are highly educated. Besides going to a pub, the top three results imply quite traditional highbrow activities, ones which would require specific knowledge to fully appreciate or understand.[38]

In contrast to the linear correlation of the Pearson Correlation test, the ANOVA test looks to see if there are significant differences in how often people

[38] The activity of 'going to a pub' is most likely related to age rather than a matter of being more educated.

participate in each activity, with no implication towards a correlation with causality. Table 10 shows these results with a significance rating of more than 0.02:

Table 10: ANOVA Results: General Activities / Educational Level Groups

Activity	Sig.
Attend popular music concerts	7.61E-12
See live theatre	5.9E-14
Visit historical sites	5.47E-30
Go to a nightclub	5.09E-14
Read for pleasure	4.63E-25
Visit art galleries	3.62E-48
Watch documentaries	3.3E-29
Garden	3.1E-13
Attend a ballet performance	3.05E-08
Go to the library	3.01E-29
Play video games	2.54E-18
Attend classical music concerts	2.27E-21
Visit museums	1.82E-54
Create art	1.82E-05
Go to a pub	1.78E-44
Perform music	1.04E-05
Watch TV	0.795011
Watch a sporting event	0.479755
Participate in outdoor pursuits	0.453938
Create crafts	0.023677
Listen to music	0.015607
Participate in a sport activity	0.003254
Compose music	0.001489
Play a musical instrument	0.000662
See a movie at the cinema	0.000392

Comparable to the Pearson Correlation results, visit museums (Sig. 1.81E-54), visit art galleries (Sig. = 3.62E-48), and visit historical sites (Sig. = 5.47E-30) had very high significance ratings. These results strengthen the Pearson Correlation between education level and leisure activity participation results in that not only is there a linear regression between groups, but the actual differences between them are quite large. Visually, the results become more obvious when examining the means plots. Figures 4 to 6 below show the top four significant results, with the exception

of 'going to the pub' (it is more likely that this is due to age), with their means and means plots:

Figure 4: Means Plot: Visit Museums / Educational Level Groups

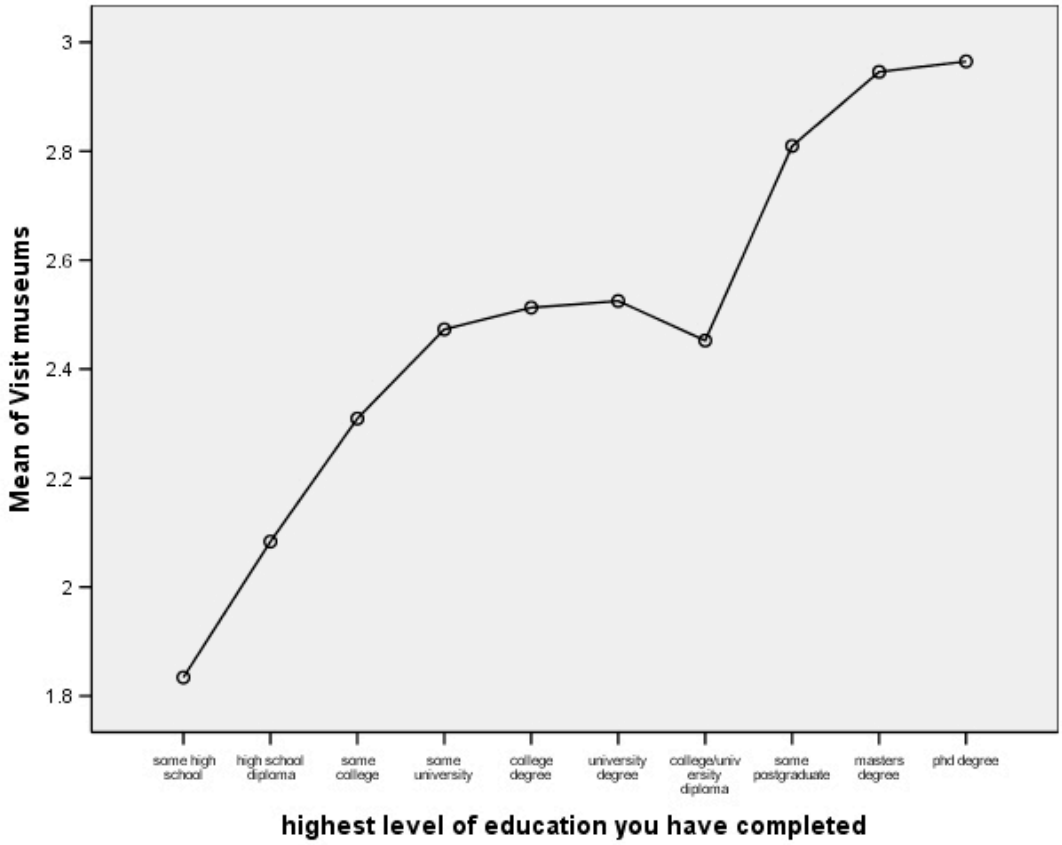


Table 11: Means: Visit Museums / Educational Level Groups

Activity	Educational Level	N	Mean
Visit museums	some high school	247	1.834008
	high school diploma	60	2.083333
	some college	110	2.309091
	some university	148	2.472973
	college degree	78	2.512821
	university degree	200	2.525000
	college/university diploma	42	2.452381
	some postgraduate	63	2.809524
	masters degree	202	2.945545
	phd degree	85	2.964706
	Total	1235	2.450202

Figure 5: Means Plot: Visit Art Galleries / Educational Level Groups

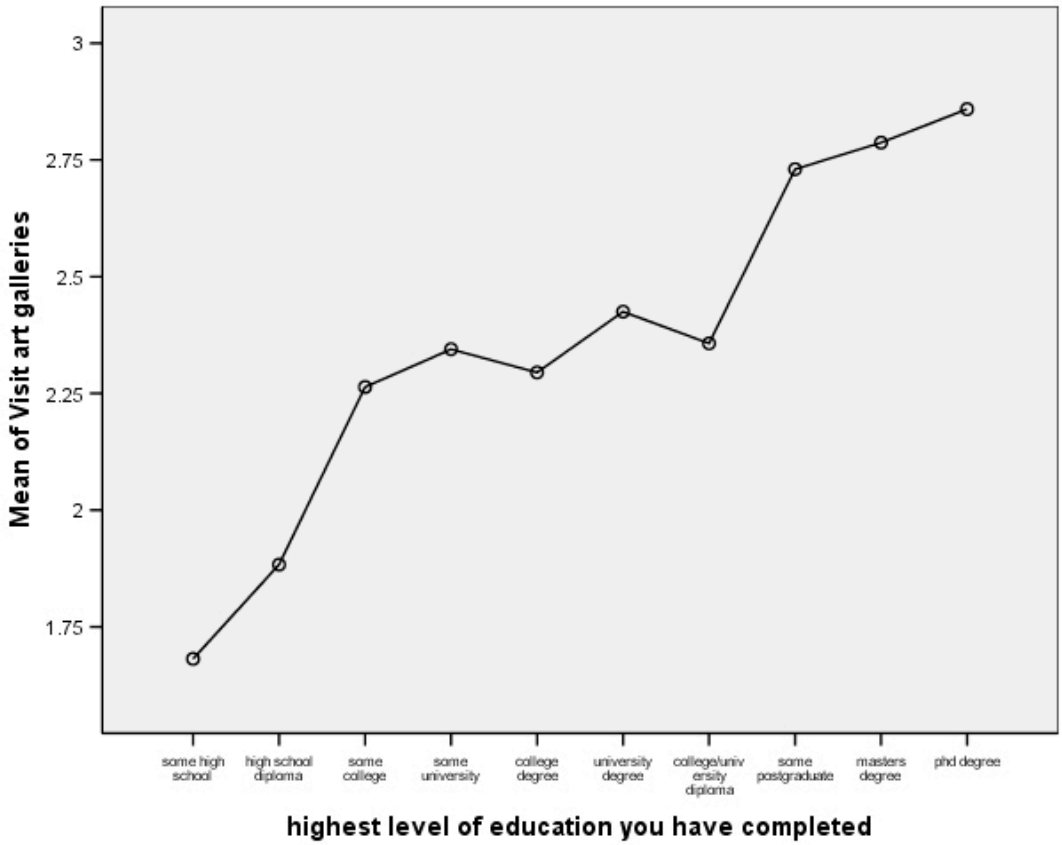


Table 12: Means: Visit Art Galleries / Educational Level Groups

Activity	Education Level	N	Mean
Visit art galleries	some high school	245	1.681633
	high school diploma	60	1.883333
	some college	110	2.263636
	some university	148	2.344595
	college degree	78	2.294872
	university degree	200	2.425000
	college/university diploma	42	2.357143
	some postgraduate	63	2.730159
	masters degree	202	2.787129
	phd degree	85	2.858824
	Total	1233	2.321168

Figure 6: Means Plot: Visit Historical Sites / Educational Level Groups

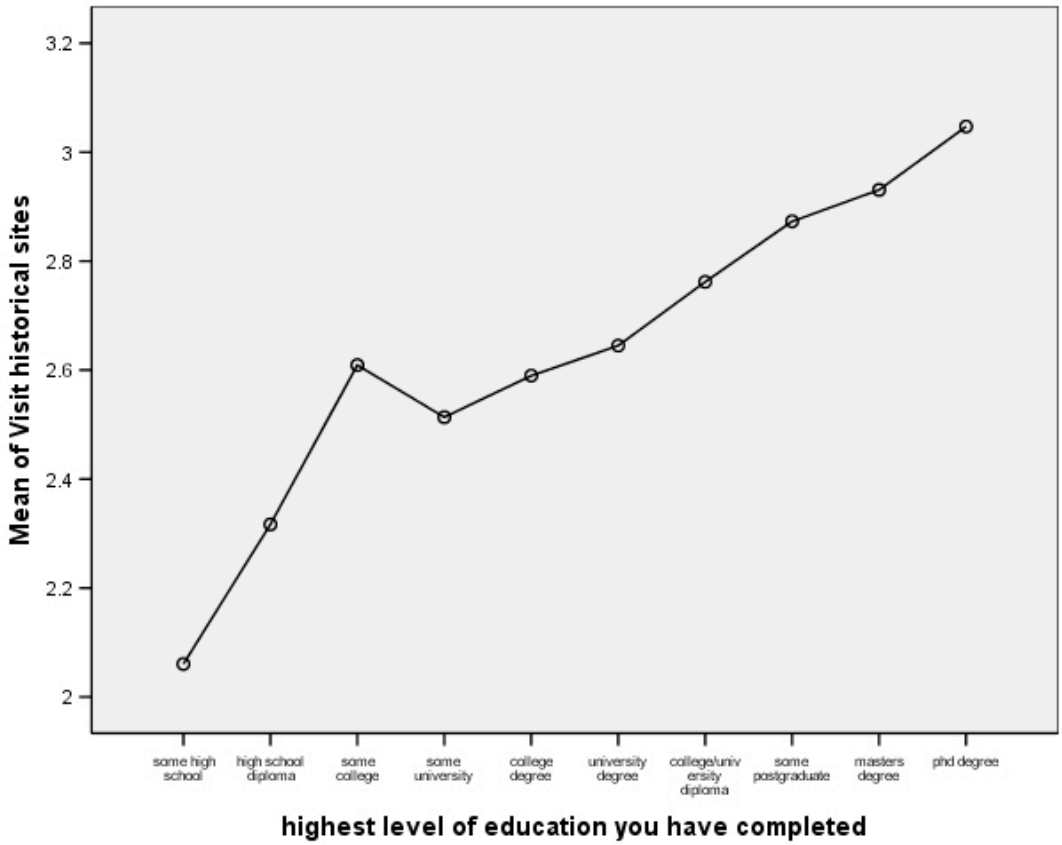


Table 13: Means: Visit Historical Sites / Educational Level Groups

Activity	Education Level	N	Mean
Visit museums	some high school	247	1.834008
	high school diploma	60	2.083333
	some college	110	2.309091
	some university	148	2.472973
	college degree	78	2.512821
	university degree	200	2.525000
	college/university diploma	42	2.452381
	some postgraduate	63	2.809524
	masters degree	202	2.945545
	phd degree	85	2.964706
	Total	1235	2.450202

The above tables show the significance of educational levels against the top three variables, but it should be noted that the majority of the general activities were statistically influenced by educational levels. These results indicate that educational

levels can be considered an important element in the production of taste. The next section will examine these variables in regards to occupational status.

2. Occupational Status

An ANOVA test was conducted to determine whether occupational status is a good indicator of taste in regards to everyday leisure activities. A linear correlation test could not be conducted, as job status is not a linear variable. Table 14 provides an overview of the ANOVA test results in descending order of significance:

Table 14: ANOVA Results: General Activities / Occupational Status Groups

Activities	Sig.
Watch documentaries	6.95E-15
Garden	3.32E-14
Read for pleasure	1.55E-10
Visit art galleries	1.79E-09
Visit museums	4.61E-09
Visit historical sites	1.45E-07
Go to a pub	8.04E-07
Play a musical instrument	1.68E-06
Perform music	2E-06
Compose music	1.08E-05
Play video games	1.71E-05
Attend popular music concerts	0.000647
Go to the library	0.00131
Create art	0.002382
Attend classical music concerts	0.006634
See live theatre	0.043807
Participate in outdoor pursuits(hiking/camping)	0.081924
Watch a sporting event	0.114175
Go to a nightclub	0.124375
Watch TV	0.124402
Listen to music	0.290023
Create crafts	0.375918
Participate in a sport activity	0.66108
Attend a ballet performance	0.684789
See a movie at the cinema	0.697464

The ANOVA test indicates that there are significant differences between groups. The higher the significance rating, the more likely those in that group partake in different activities as opposed to other groups. Results that had the highest statistical differences between groups are:

1. Watch documentaries (Sig. = 6.95E-15)
2. Garden (Sig. = 3.32E-14)
3. Read for pleasure (Sig. = 1.55E-10)
4. Visit art galleries (Sig. = 1.79E-09)
5. Visit historical sites (Sig. = 1.45E-07)
6. Play a musical instrument (Sig. = 1.68E-06)
7. Perform music (Sig. = 1.99E-06)
8. Compose music (Sig. = 1.07E-05)
9. Play video games (Sig. = 1.71E-05)

These significance ratings, while very high, are not as statistically significant as those from the educational level groups' results.

The following chart shows the means for the top five statistically significant results, indicating which of the groups is more likely to participate in each variable:

Table 15: Means Charts: Statistically Significant General Activities / Occupational Status

Activity	Occupational Status	N	Mean
Watch documentaries	employed full time	501	3.726547
	employed part time	85	3.505882
	student full time	487	3.098563
	student part time	25	3.360000
	unemployed	54	3.277778
	between jobs	18	3.611111
	self employed	58	3.551724
	retired	14	3.642857
	Total	1242	3.427536
Garden	employed full time	501	2.243513
	employed part time	85	2.152941
	student full time	488	1.696721
	student part time	25	2.040000
	unemployed	54	1.981481
	between jobs	18	2.000000
	self employed	58	2.448276
	retired	14	3.000000
	Total	1243	2.021722
Read for pleasure	employed full time	501	4.171657
	employed part time	85	4.000000
	student full time	488	3.637295
	student part time	25	3.840000
	unemployed	54	3.518519
	between jobs	18	3.833333
	self employed	58	4.413793
	retired	14	3.928571
	Total	1243	3.918745
Visit art galleries	employed full time	501	2.471058
	employed part time	85	2.435294
	student full time	485	2.134021
	student part time	25	2.240000
	unemployed	54	1.944444
	between jobs	18	2.388889
	self employed	58	2.689655
	retired	14	2.571429
	Total	1240	2.319355
Visit museums	employed full time	501	2.602794
	employed part	85	2.411765

These results provide interesting fodder in a discussion on taste formation. While previous literature focuses on education and social class as indicators of taste, what these results show is that the amount of personal leisure time one is afforded is also an important determinant. This does not negate the fact that occupational status is an important factor, as it dictates the amount of free time people have. Free time, therefore, though something not considered by any studies, to date, should be a variable explored in further research in this field.

The second most statistically significant result, correlating gardening with retired respondents, would suggest that retirees have the needed free time to devote to gardening, more so than full time students, who scored lowest in this category. Similarly, those who are retired are more likely to visit historical sites than full time students. Interestingly, full time students are less likely to read for pleasure than most other groups, probably because they spend an inexorable time reading journal articles and textual material. Given the results, it would seem that those who are employed, either full or part time, tend to read for pleasure more often.

Those who are self-employed are statistically more likely to visit art galleries, while at the other end of the spectrum are the unemployed. As with the results for reading for pleasure, this is counterintuitive to the premise that free time transitions into leisure activities. It does, however, show that cultural capital remains an important indicator of taste. The unemployed may have the time to visit art galleries, read books or garden, but perhaps not the economic means to afford them, or the social cachet to feel comfortable in those activities. There can, of course, be no cost involved, so it just shows, once again, that we cannot rely on a singular indicator for taste. There must be a complementary examination to develop a cultural map.

3. Marital Status

The marital status category reported even less statistically significant differences between each group, and for the majority, smaller significance ratings than both education level and occupational status. Those with statistically significant variables between groups are:

1. Garden (Sig. = 1.12E-27)
2. Watch documentaries (Sig. = 3.41E-15)
3. Visit museums (Sig. = 7.04E-10)
4. Visit historical sites (Sig. = 5.20E-09)
5. Go to a nightclub (Sig. = 1.71E-06)

The means for marital status are as follows:

Table 16: Means Charts: General Activities / Marital Status

Activity	Marital Status	N	Mean
Garden	single	725	1.742069
	married	271	2.630996
	separated	15	2.600000
	divorced	32	2.656250
	engaged	32	2.000000
	live with partner	133	2.127820
	widowed	4	2.750000
	Total	1212	2.028053
Watch documentaries	single	724	3.207182
	married	271	3.874539
	separated	15	3.200000
	divorced	32	3.718750
	engaged	32	3.468750
	live with partner	133	3.661654
	widowed	4	3.250000
	Total	1211	3.426920
Visit museums	single	724	2.308011
	married	271	2.701107
	separated	15	2.733333
	divorced	32	2.562500
	engaged	32	2.843750
	live with partner	133	2.533835
	widowed	4	2.500000
	Total	1211	2.447564
Visit historical sites	single	725	2.446897
	married	271	2.878229
	separated	15	2.733333
	divorced	32	2.625000
	engaged	32	2.843750
	live with partner	133	2.571429
	widowed	4	2.250000
	Total	1212	2.575083
Go to a nightclub	single	630	2.314286
	married	271	1.859779
	separated	15	1.333333
	divorced	32	2.031250
	engaged	32	2.250000
	live with partner	133	2.187970
	widowed	4	2.500000
	Total	1117	2.166517

Some of these results may seem fairly obvious; for example, single people are statistically more likely to go to nightclubs than those who are married. The results also suggest that those who are separated are less likely to go to a nightclub than all other groups. For those who are divorced, engaged or widowed, nightclubs would provide a socialization experience.

4. Gender

The issue of gender and taste formation has typically been a contentious one in scholarly literature. With music preference, in particular, there has been much speculation about what genres males and females prefer, with the assumption that pop music is meant for young girls, while males of all ages prefer rock.[39] However, there has not been significant quantitative analysis done on the subject. While gender is often included in taste formation studies, it tends to be pushed to the side as a secondary, or even tertiary, variable. I think there is a fear that focusing on gender perpetuates essentialist stereotypes, by placing entire groups into categories while ignoring the fluidity of gender formation[40]. Throughout this thesis, gender issues have a voice, but only when gender differences are relevant. I also do not want to contribute to, or reinforce gender stereotypes, as that would perpetuate the negative connotations. How different groups are involved in digital culture is important, but not group character assassinations.

In regards to the general activities questions, there were differences in how males and females participated. Table 17, below, shows the results from the ANOVA test:

[39] Simon Frith, *Performing Rites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mavis Bayton, *Frock Rock* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Diane Railton, 'The Gendered Carnival of Pop,' *Popular Music* 20.3 (October, 2001): 321-331; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender & Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

[40] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

Table 17: ANOVA Results: General Activities / Gender

Activity	Sig.
Create crafts	3.74E-37
Create art	1.97E-12
Attend a ballet performance	3.08E-11
Compose music	6.67E-10
Watch a sporting event	7.13E-10
Play video games	3.41E-09
See live theatre	2.90E-06
Watch documentaries	5.92E-06
Go to a pub	0.000156
Go to the library	0.000211
Play a musical instrument	0.003871
Garden	0.020884
Visit museums	0.025539
Participate in a sport activity	0.069769
Visit art galleries	0.073918
Attend popular music concerts	0.081296
Attend classical music concerts	0.160862
See a movie at the cinema	0.161084
Visit historical sites	0.226562
Read for pleasure	0.264153
Watch TV	0.805007
Go to a nightclub	0.881319
Perform music	0.906553
Participate in outdoor pursuits (hiking/camping)	0.965958

As Table 17 demonstrates, there are a significant number of activities that have statistically different participation levels between males and females. Among those with a significant rating are:

High female participation (descending order of significance):

1. create crafts (Sig. = 3.74E-37)
2. create art (Sig. = 1.97E-11)
3. attend ballet performance (Sig. = 3.08E-11)
4. see live theatre (Sig. = 2.9E-06)
5. go to a library (Sig. = 0.0002)

High male participation (descending order of significance):

1. compose music (Sig. = 6.67E-10)
2. watch sports events (Sig. = 7.13E-10)
3. play video games (Sig. = 3.41E-09)
4. watch documentaries (Sig. = 5.92E-06)

5. go to a pub (Sig. = 0.00015)
6. play musical instrument (Sig. = 0.0038)

While wary of reading too much into these results, it is interesting to note that this group of female respondents tends to participate in what can be considered highbrow activities, such as attending ballet performances and seeing live theatre statistically more so than the males. The males, on the other hand, seem to participate in more lowbrow activities, such as playing video games, going to pubs and watching sports events. Unfortunately, it is unclear which sports they are watching, as each has distinct social connotations. These results corroborate Katz-Gerro's findings that women tend to take part in more highbrow activities[41].

It should also be noted that males and females seem to express their creativity in disparate artistic endeavours. While males tend to express their creativity through musical performance and composition, something which requires very specific, analytical knowledge and hearing sets, females do so through arts and crafts, which are very visual and require spatial symmetry knowledge. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 1.4, these findings correspond to the ways in which male and female respondents engage with music: males are more likely to participate in the 'technological' side of music engagement, such as making playlists on a computer, or downloading illegally, while females are more likely to make playlists for moods, listen to music with friends, or use music to alter/reflect their moods.

5. Age/Generation

As with gender, age has not often been considered a factor in taste formation, especially in studies dealing with quantitative data, probably because it has been assumed that taste, like other characteristics, is set for life. Age is a central theme to this thesis, particularly as it concerns generational differences between digital natives and digital immigrants[42]. Age would also seem to be an underlying factor in all the variables. For example, each educational level dictates a minimum age; full time students are most likely to be younger than those in full time employment; the older one is, the more likely they are to be married, while those under the age of 18 are not even legally permitted to marry. Age, as a variable, cannot be considered on its own, but as one piece in the puzzle that is our cultural map. It is, nevertheless, an

[41] Katz-Gerro, 'Cultural Consumption and Social Stratification,' 639.
[42] See Chapter 2.1 for definitions

important piece in the puzzle, and one that has not been fully considered in previous literature.

A linear regression test concluded that age was a statistically significant factor in a number of general activities. Table 18 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation test which reported a significance at the 0.01 level.

Table 18: Linear Regression Results: General Activities / Age

	Activities	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Positive Correlation	See live theatre	.114(**)	6.13E-05	1226
	Visit museums	.309(**)	1.55E-28	1225
	Visit art galleries	.288(**)	8.75E-25	1223
	Visit historical sites	.276(**)	7.54E-23	1226
	Attend classical music concerts	.144(**)	4.62E-07	1224
	Attend popular music concerts	.091(**)	0.001459	1225
	Attend a ballet performance	.089(**)	0.001860	1226
	Garden	.366(**)	3.53E-40	1226
	Read for pleasure	.227(**)	9.59E-16	1226
	Watch documentaries	.299(**)	8.85E-27	1225
	Go to a pub	.086(**)	0.003848	1138
Negative Correlation	Create art	-.117(**)	3.98E-05	1226
	Perform music	-.096(**)	0.000759	1224
	Participate in a sport activity	-.081(**)	0.004344	1224
	See a movie at the cinema	-.083(**)	0.003505	1225
	Go to a nightclub	-.091(**)	0.002236	1138
	Play video games	-.282(**)	7.85E-24	1226

As Table 18 demonstrates, there is statistical evidence to support the premise that as people age, they are more likely to (in descending order):

1. Garden (Pearson Correlation = .366)
2. Visit Museums (Pearson Correlation = .309)
3. Watch Documentaries (Pearson Correlation = .299)
4. Visit Art Galleries (Pearson Correlation = .288)
5. Visit Historical Sites (Pearson Correlation = .276)

On the other hand, results showing strong negative correlations include (in descending order):

1. Play Video Games (Pearson Correlation = -.282)
2. Create Art (Pearson Correlation = -.117)

Looking further into these results, if we break down the ages of the respondents into decades, an ANOVA test can detect significant differences between decade groups. As there were only two respondents over the age of 80, this decade was removed, so as not to skew results. These results can be found in Table 19 below:

Table 19: ANOVA Results: General Activities / Age by Decade

Activity	Sig.
See a movie at the cinema	6.36E-06
See live theatre	1.69E-07
Visit museums	2.76E-38
Visit art galleries	1.48E-30
Visit historical sites	4.36E-24
Play a musical instrument	0.003511
Perform music	0.00065
Attend classical music concerts	2.48E-09
Attend popular music concerts	1.02E-07
Attend a ballet performance	0.000149
Create art	7.04E-07
Create crafts	0.002424
Garden	2.75E-36
Go to the library	3.53E-05
Read for pleasure	9.05E-22
Watch documentaries	2.87E-33
Go to a pub	5.66E-46
Go to a nightclub	4.06E-13
Play video games	1.66E-18
Participate in a sport activity	0.021809
Compose music	0.106681
Watch TV	0.211148
Watch a sporting event	0.622544
Participate in outdoor pursuits(hiking/camping)	0.636938

The ANOVA test indicates particularly high statistical differences between decades, in regards to the following activities (in descending order):

1. Play video games (Sig. = 5.66E-46)
2. Visit museums (Sig. = 2.76E-38)
3. Garden (Sig. = 2.75E-36)
4. Watch documentaries (Sig. = 2.87E-33)
5. Visit art galleries (Sig. = 1.48E-30)

6. Visit historical sites (Sig. = 4.36E-24)

Table 20 provides the means for these results:

Table 20: Means: Decades / General Activities

Activity	Age	N	Mean
Go to a pub	1	195	1.810256(-)
	2	499	3.384770(+)
	3	246	3.20325200
	4	116	3.12069000
	5	66	2.59090900
	6	14	2.57142900
	Total	1136	2.99207700
Visit museums	1	282	1.897163(-)
	2	499	2.50901800
	3	246	2.67073200
	4	116	2.879310(+)
	5	66	2.72727300
	6	14	2.85714300
	Total	1223	2.45134900
Garden	1	283	1.646643(-)
	2	499	1.79358700
	3	246	2.30487800
	4	116	2.63793100
	5	66	2.90909100
	6	14	3.714286(+)
	Total	1224	2.02451000
Watch documentaries	1	282	2.765957(-)
	2	499	3.47695400
	3	246	3.72764200
	4	116	4.017241(+)
	5	66	3.75757600
	6	14	3.78571400
	Total	1223	3.43336100
Visit art galleries	1	280	1.785714(-)
	2	499	2.37875800
	3	246	2.54878000
	4	116	2.68965500
	5	66	2.63636400
	6	14	2.857143(+)
	Total	1221	2.32596200
Visit historical sites	1	283	2.134276(-)
	2	499	2.61923800
	3	246	2.72357700
	4	116	2.88793100
	5	66	3.04545500
	6	14	3.214286(+)
	Total	1224	2.58333300

Age: 1= 10 – 19; 2 = 20 – 29; 3 = 30 – 39; 4 = 40 – 49; 5 = 50 – 59; 6 = 60 – 69
Means: + = highest mean frequency; - = lowest mean frequency

After eliminating the results for the category, go to pub, because of obvious age restrictions skewing results, the remaining top five activities correspond to the results

from the Pearson Correlation test, further strengthening those distinctions. Through a breakdown by decade, it can clearly be identified how age affects participation in these activities. For example, gardening, visiting art galleries, and visiting historical sites, all follow clear linear regressions: the older the respondent, the more likely they are to participate in these activities. On the other hand, visiting museums shows an increase in participation up to age range 40-49, and then remains fairly steady until the oldest of respondents. The watching documentaries category suggests a similar pattern, except that the mean frequency tapers off slightly for those 50 and above.

***

Throughout the examination of general activities and identity variables a few activities stood out with recurring high significance ratings in almost all identity variables, which would suggest a particular demographic association. As the data intimates, in our cultural map these activities confer a statistically probable user: those who visit museums tend to be older, engaged, or hold a graduate degree; those who garden tend to be older, divorced or retired; watching documentaries is associated with older males, who tend to be married and employed full time; and those who frequent historical sites tend to be older, married or retired. Interestingly, the majority of significant results in our cultural map are associated with older respondents. For younger respondents, significant ratings were seen for: playing videos games, being in high school, while young females are more likely to create art.

Finally, the following section will explore these general activities to see if they can potentially be mapped onto musical tastes.

6. General Activities and Musical Taste

Building on the works of Katz-Gerro and North and Hargreaves correlating leisure and music tastes, the following section will attempt to determine if, and how we can map general activities onto musical preferences. In response to the narrow definition of music taste, as well as one selection per person by North and Hargreaves, my survey requested people select how often they listened to each of the 86 genres in the list. Chapter 1.2 will explore these different genre selections.

A Linear Regression test was performed, correlating general activities with 52 genres (genres with a mean frequency of 2.0 or less were eliminated prior to the test). A significantly high number of variables reported significances at the 0.01 level, but for the sake of statistical probability only those responses which yielded a Pearson Correlation coefficient of .250 or greater will be discussed.

By far, the highest correlation coefficients were between: attending classical music concerts, and listening to classical music (Pearson Correlation Coefficient = .643), and attending music concerts and listening to orchestral music (Pearson Correlation Coefficient = .616). This seems like a fairly obvious result, in that people who listen to classical would presumably attend classical music concerts. Other high rated genres that correlate with attending classical music concerts also display highbrow values, including: jazz (PCC = .373), contemporary jazz (PCC = .334), traditional jazz (PCC = .378), musicals soundtracks (PCC = .269), and world (PCC = .275). Those who report a higher mean frequency for attending popular music concerts are more likely to listen to: indie folk (PCC = .308), singer/songwriter (PCC = .288), motown (PCC = .270) brit pop (PCC = .253), post-rock (PCC = .324), indie rock (PCC = .399), punk (PCC = .310), punk rock (PCC = .302) and 1970s punk (PCC = .325). These are clearly all pop-oriented genres and, therefore, seem like quite obvious correlations.

Attending either popular or classical music concerts was central in guiding correlations to genres. Both types of concerts demonstrated consistent correlations and a large quantity of statistically significant results. Genres which had numerous statistically significant activity correlations included: classical, orchestral, jazz and traditional jazz. Interestingly, these genres also had a lot of preferred activities in common, which further corroborates the importance of identity markers, adding to our overall cultural map. Table 21 provides a summary of these findings:

Table 21: Pearson Correlation Coefficient: General Activities / Genres (selected)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients	Classical	Orchestral	Jazz	Traditional Jazz
See live theatre	.300	.288	.260	
Visit museums	.303	.267	.253	.284
Visit art galleries	.280		.302	.311
Visit historical sites	.300	.266		.250
Play a musical instrument	.290	.311	.274	.255
Perform music	.320	.331		.257
Attend classical music concerts	.643	.616	.373	.334
Attend ballet performance	.391	.368	.259	.258
Go to the library	.308	.271		

Although Katz-Gerro hoped to correlate lifestyle choices with genre in order to eliminate the highbrow/lowbrow debate, Table 21 clearly demonstrates a correlation between highbrow activities and highbrow genre preferences. These are the most statistically significant results for the Linear regression test, and indicate that those who participate in more highbrow activities tend to listen to highbrow genres. Of interest, the correlations between stereotypically lowbrow activities, such as watching TV, playing video games, and go to a pub/nightclub, with what could be considered lowbrow, or pop-focused genres, were not as strong as those for highbrow activities.

***

This chapter has explored preferences for everyday-life activities, and their correlation to musical taste. Quantitative data guided the results, providing quite straightforward, statistically-based examinations. A variety of identity determinants were explored, including gender, marital status, education level and occupational status, as well as age. Although a review of the literature has shown that age was not previously considered as a primary variable in the correlation between social indicator and taste, my results indicate that age should be taken more seriously in the field. This is not to say that age should be considered a sole determiner of taste, but that it is an important variable in the creation of a *map* of tastes. Moving past a focus

on quantitative analysis, the next section will deal more with qualitative, interview-based results, looking at *why* people make their listening choices.

1.2: MUSIC AND EVERYDAY LIFE

There is no doubt that music plays an integral role in people's lives. Music is an important element in identity and taste formation, group behaviour, and mood regulation. It can provide emotional support and release, as well as trigger memories. It can be an outward expression of identity, or a catalyst for social interaction by creating a bond between two people or tying them together in heated debate. While music is an intensely personal phenomenon, it can also unite groups. It defines us, and situates us in our environment and place in life[43].

How music is used in everyday life, therefore, is an important topic for research as it informs us not only about ourselves, but also about the society in which we live. It affords us better insight into *how* we use music in our lives, and what that means for our sociability. To date, the majority of the research conducted on this topic has come out of the field of sociology. Music sociologists have identified the key functions of music in everyday life as: identity formation, group identification, communication, and mood regulation.[44] Through a combination of survey and interview data, this chapter will examine *how*, *why* and *with whom* people are consuming music.

Immense technological change within music creation and dissemination has drastically changed the way in which we interact with music. Through the lens of digitality and iPod culture, this chapter will explore music in everyday life, starting with an examination of the sociological literature before moving on to new approaches in music psychology and finishing with a look at the data used for the current study. Throughout, attention will be paid to the generational and gender differences as they relate to the interaction and consumption of music, specifically between digital youths/natives and the digital immigrants. It would be beneficial to determine if technological change has impacted these two groups equally, and if not, what the specific, generational differences are. Also, the validity of the hypothesis that women have more of a social involvement with music than men and are more

[43] Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998)
[44] DeNora, *Music and Everyday Life*; Frith, *Performing Rites*; Sara Cohen, 'Sounding out the City: Music and the Sensuous Production of Place,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20.4 (1995): 434-446.

likely to use music as a way of enhancing and regulating emotions, as well as for memory-retrieval purposes, must be proven, or disputed.

Review of the Literature:

(1) Music Sociology

As music has an inherently social facet, it follows that it would be studied sociologically[45]. Most notable, as will be discussed below, are the works of Tia DeNora and her empirical examination of music in everyday life, Simon Frith's theories of music as a process towards group identity, and Andy Bennett's research concerning musical identities, localities and youths.

Just as Bourdieu wrote that 'taste classifies and classifies the classifier,' Frith writes that we assume to know someone through their tastes.[46] How one engages with music, what they choose to consume, and how they consume it, are referential to one's identity; they place someone in particular contexts and stereotypes. As will be discussed in Chapter 1.4, fan stereotypes allow us to assume we understand someone based on what they listen to. These differences, as Frith notes, are entirely socially constructed identity perceptions, which are not always rooted in fact. The problem stems from the subjective nature of music perception. Frith alleges that to be engaged with popular music is to be judgmental, but the subjectivity of these judgments still needs to be studied within academia. For Frith, 'we can only hear music as valuable when we know what to listen to and how to listen for it'[47]. Music evokes differing moods, emotions and memories for each person, so it becomes difficult to categorize someone based on their musical tastes, even though the practice is commonplace. The sentiment that 'my' music is always going to be better than 'theirs' leaves us to question: what is it that draws us to have emotional engagement with certain styles?

Tia DeNora, in her influential work, *Music in Everyday Life*, attempts to answer some of these questions through a large-scale, interview-based study of

[45] Susan D. Crafts, Daniel Cavicchi and Charles Keil, *My Music: Music in Daily Life Project* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993); Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1982); Andrew Leyson, David Mathless and George Revill, *The Place of Music* (New York: Guildord Press, 1998)
[46] Frith, *Performing Rites*.
[47] Ibid.

music and personal engagement. Although the work was premised solely on a female perspective, DeNora concluded that music:

1. serves as a model of self
2. aids in the production of an autobiography
3. is an indicator of emotional wellbeing
4. is a resource to turn to in aesthetic, reflexive practice
5. offers cues for behaviour in social settings
6. 'sets the scene'
7. is generationally-bound
8. serves as a medium through which feeling, perception, attention, consciousness, action and embodied processes are produced.[48]

DeNora also sets out the aims of her research, when she notes that her book is:

> To document some of the many uses to which music is and can be put, and to describe a range of strategies through which music is mobilized as a resource for putting the scenes, routines, assumptions and occasions that constitute "social life". Building upon these tasks, the second aim is to relocate music – as a type of aesthetic material – in relation to sociology's project, to bring it closer to the discipline's core concerns.[49]

Just as Frith argues for the subjectivity of musical value and judgments, DeNora notes that, in a sociological examination of music in everyday life, one must take into account *what* is being examined. While musicologists often place the meaning of music in the lyrics – what the artist is trying to convey and how the audience reacts to the lyrics – there must be more emphasis placed on the music itself, as it exists in a social environment. Songs exist in their own right, but it is the discourse and subjective engagement with it which determine its meaning and worth to the individual. Merely talking about a song adds to its discourse, and alters the way in which it will be perceived. DeNora draws on Hennion and Kingsbury when she notes that 'all discourse "about" the musical object helps to constitute that object'[50]. According to DeNora:

> It is possible to speak of the content of effects of musical works, but never to speak of those matters in relation to (that standard phrase within arts sociology) "the works themselves". For the work "itself" cannot be specified; it is anything, everything, nothing. The social identity of the work – like all social identities – emerges from its interaction and juxtaposition to others, people, and things.[51]

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[48] DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life.*
[49] Ibid., xi.
[50] Ibid., 30.
[51] Ibid., 31.

Therefore, it is the relationships that become important: between people and music, between music and groups, and between people and the each other via music. Meaning is achieved through engagement, both at the individual and group levels, and it can change depending on the situation and environment. For example, one may have an indifferent attitude towards a particular song, but if it is playing during a key moment – a first kiss with a new love or, alternatively, while fighting with a best friend – that song becomes embedded in a memory and complementary emotion. This is central to the person-music relationship and the creation of meaning.

Similarly, DeNora's research suggests that one of the most important functions of music is its role in mood and energy regulation. Not only do individuals listen to certain songs in an effort to regulate their mood, but in social situations, the music being played often gives cues for appropriate behaviour. In regards to mood regulation, DeNora found that music:

> Is a resource for modulating and structuring the parameters of aesthetic energy – feeling, motivations, desire, comportment, action style, and energy. By this, what respondents often mean is that its specific properties – its rhythms, gestures, harmonies, styles and so on – are used as referents or representations of where they wish to be or go, emotionally, physically and so on. Respondents make, in other words, articulations between musical works, styles and materials on the one hand, and modes of agency on the other, such that music is used, prospectively, to sketch aspired and partially imaged or felt states.[52]

In this sense, music provides an outlet for emotional release by allowing people to identify with an outside source. What DeNora's research does not address, because it was conducted only with females, is if this is female-specific. As will be discussed in the results section, data from the present research suggests that women are more likely than males to have an emotional connection to music, as well as use it for mood regulation.

An aspect of musical meaning that is not gender-specific, however, is its relation to identity formation. DeNora argues that identity formation is a product of musical memory-association, so that music becomes an important facet of our identity and how we portray ourselves to the outside world. In this sense, music acts

[52] Ibid., 53.

as a 'mirror for self-perception,' in which one can self locate[53]. Similarly, Frith notes that our historical engagement with music shapes our current perception of music and, in turn, impacts our identities. For Frith:

> Music constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers the body, time, and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives.[54]

This can be extrapolated to our present circumstances, and how we position ourselves within our cultural and social landscape. At the national level, music is important in forging a national identity and developing nationalistic pride and cohesion. Music provides a shared, communal past between groups of people in local settings, thereby connecting displaced people, as well as providing a collective sense of identity and community.[55] For Cohen, a sense of music-based group identity is important for the production and definition of 'space' and 'place'. Speaking about the experiences of immigrant Jews, she notes that their rituals and traditional music help to unite them in their new locality. In her words:

> The consumption and production of music also draws people together and symbolizes their sense of collectivity and place. For the immigrant Jews of Brownlow Hill, music (religious, folk, popular, and classical) played an important role in everyday life and the rituals, routines, and discourses that comprised it. Music was in fact the focus of many social gatherings, helping to establish and strengthen the immigrants' relations with each other or their relationship with God, and music also framed particular events such as wedding ceremonies and religious festivals, setting them apart from other daily activities, heightening their symbolic significance.[56]

With the advent of digital culture, locality becomes less relevant as relationships can be formed without being bound by geography. I would argue that discourse-based identities have become more important, and maybe even more relevant than geographic-based identities, at the youth level. It is the digital natives, those who have grown up immersed in digital culture, that would be most affected. If a music-based group is not available locally, it can likely be found online

Andy Bennett has been integral in promoting the idea of a discourse-based identity group, especially amongst youth. Bennett finds that youth have a unique

[53] Ibid., 70.
[54] Frith, *Performing Rites*, 275.
[55] Sheila Whiteley, Andy Bennett and Stan Hawkins, *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004): 5.
[56] Cohen, 'Sounding out the City,' 436.

relationship to music, in that it occupies a large proportion of their leisure time. As he notes:

> In many different parts of the world popular music is a primary, if not *the* primary, leisure resource for young people. Popular music features in young people's lives in a variety of different ways and in a diverse range of contexts…for a great many young people, popular music is an omnipresent aspect of their day to day existence.[57]

While Bennett does not directly cite digitality as an influence on local identity, he notes that globalization is altering the way in which youth engage with music. In order to carve out their own narratives within the urban space, youth look to commonalities in music preferences. This belief can then be applied to the internet – youth can use the internet and, specifically, internet-based communities, to define and create their own narratives, in relation to musical engagement. They can find on-line communities of similar users to form relationships.

Digital culture also dramatically changes *how* people, not just youth, consume music. Music downloading, in particular, has altered people's perceptions of good musical quality, especially since music is often listened to via low-quality earphones supplied with mobile digital devices, such as the iPod, or even mobile phones. Consumers are now able to listen to their music in almost any environment, closed within a personal bubble of sound within their earphones. Soundtracking one's life has never been easier, or more desirable. Even if we can consider music as an outward expression of identity, or mood, the use of personalized music devices places such expression back in the internal realm. They are private experiences between the listener and their music. While music psychologists, as will be discussed below, have found that people tend to consume music alone, these devices allow people to consume *alone together*. In public places, listeners can enjoy their own private sounds and musical meanings, while shielding their preferences and identity from those in their environment. What this means for identity formation and portrayal is still unknown, but is a subject for further investigation.

(2) Music Psychology

Music psychology is notorious for studying real-world scenarios in laboratory settings, which eliminates the role of outside factors, by assuming that results will be

[57] Andy Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place* (London; New York: St Martin's Press, 2001): 34.

the same outside the lab. Issues of taste, especially in regards to music, are fairly, but not entirely dependent on outside factors. We do not consume music in a vacuum, and our tastes are not formed from thin air – we are influenced by a variety of factors, such as friends, mood, environment, personality, family, and so on. For example, the experience of listening to a dance track in a club will be quite different than in a lab setting. Listeners generally want music to instil a desired affect, and if not achieved, it will generally not be enjoyed.

There has been a call, led by North and Hargreaves, to incorporate sociological methodologies in the psychological study of music. Since their 1999 article examining the sociology of music psychology, there has followed a stream of studies blending sociological and psychological methods in musical taste analysis. In turn, as with sociology, music psychology has found that music is important for cognitive, spiritual, physical and emotional development and functioning in everyday life.

North and Hargreaves, in their article, 'The functions of music in everyday life: redefining the social in music psychology', explore ways in which music impacts, and is used in everyday life, while arguing for sociological methodologies to be included in future studies. They note that there is a need for theory-driven research, recognition of the field's interdisciplinary nature, diversity of methodologies, and consideration given to the implication of the democratization of music through digital devices and the internet. Similarly to Frith and DeNora, their research shows the importance of music in identity formation and mood, suggesting that 'it has become a soundtrack to everyday life, and thus a central part of personal development and identity for many people'[58].

It is important to note that North and Hargreaves also include issues of digitality and the potential democratization of music in their examination. Sociologists have tended to shy away from the issue of genre formation and how this is altering musical taste and identity formation. Although psychologists have, in the past, had difficulty with understanding genre definitions, often relying on very broad distinctions in their studies, it is a nod in the right direction that North and Hargreaves are considering these issues. Counter to Frith's argument that music is

[58] David J. Hargreaves and Adrian C. North, 'The Functions of Music in Everyday Life: Redefining the Social in Music Psychology,' *Psychology of Music* 27.1 (April, 1999): 73.

laden with value judgments, North and Hargreaves contend that social and technological changes in the past two decades have impacted issues of taste and value. In their opinion, three processes have contributed to this: (1) the increased accessibility and decreased cost of networked computers, (2) increased miniaturization and portability of mobile, playback devices, and (3) the development and standardization of MIDI. As they note, these three developments:

> Necessitate a fundamental re-evaluation of the nature of musical participation and education, and two distinct outcomes can already be identified. First, since most information on the internet is currently available to all – it is *selected* by the user rather than *presented* by a broadcaster or educator – it is perceived as being more neutral and value-free. Previous attributions of music in particular styles as "serious" or "popular" are becoming much more difficult to make, and this is to be welcomed. Secondly, boundaries between different styles and genres are becoming increasingly blurred and subject to rapid change: we could say that musical styles are becoming increasingly democratized, and perhaps also demystified, as access to them increases.[59]

North and Hargreaves also present a summary of their work, identifying ten psychological functions of music in everyday life, as originally identified by Merriam[60]. These are quite similar to the conclusions reached by DeNora, and are as follows:

1. emotional expression
2. physical response
3. aesthetic enjoyment
4. entertainment
5. communication
6. symbolic representation
7. enforcing conformity to social norms
8. validating social institutions and religious rituals
9. the continuity and stability of culture
10. integration of society[61]

Following this article, North and Hargreaves have been involved in a number of studies looking at music, taste, and identity, with a couple of studies dealing particularly with youth involvement and engagement. Most notable are, 'The importance of music to adolescents' and 'English and American adolescents' reasons

[59] North and Hargreaves, 'The Functions of Music in Everyday Life,' 73.
[60] Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964).
[61] Ibid., 71-83.

for listening to music', both of which were conducted in 2000[62]. Because of the same time-frame, these studies yielded similar results. While the former only looked at youth in England, the latter investigated youth in both England and America in order to determine if there were differences in music consumption patterns. The 'importance of music to adolescents' study yielded a much greater data sample, although the ages were slightly younger than the one for 'English and American adolescents' reasons for listening to music'. 2465 youths, 13 and 14 years old, were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding: (a) the degree of their involvement with musical activities, (b) the importance of musical activities compared to others in their everyday life, and (c) why they, or people their age, might listen to classical or popular music styles.[63] They found a high level of musical involvement with these youth; 17.8% played an instrument at the time of the questionnaire, and over 50% had played one in the past, but had given it up. Interestingly, those who currently played a musical instrument tended to listen to more music, per day, than those who did not. From their data, North and Hargreaves concluded that:

> Adolescents are very involved with musical activities. A large percentage of them either play or have played an instrument. Also, adolescents report spending a great deal of time listening to music, predominantly whilst on their own. Finally, the sample had a clear preference for listening to pop and dance music: they were only ambivalent about other modern musical styles such as rap or rock, and disliked strongly styles which originated less recently such as folk or classical music.[64]

In corroboration of DeNora's study of music in everyday life, North and Hargreaves found that females were more likely than males to use music as a mood regulator. Males, on the other hand, used music more often as a way to create an impression on others. These results coincide with the results of the current study, which will be discussed in the results section below.

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[62] Adrian North, David Hargreaves and Susan O'Neil, 'The Importance of Music to Adolescents,' *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 70 (2000): 255-272; Tarrant, North and Hargreaves, 'English and American Adolescents' reasons for listening to music,' *Psychology of Music* 28 (2000): 166-173. Also of note: North and Hargreaves, 'Music and Adolescent Identity,' *Music Education Research* 1 (1999): 75-92; Graca M. Boal-Palheiros and David J. Hargreaves, 'Listening to Music at Home and at School,' *British Journal of Music Education* 18 (2001): 103-118.
[63] North, Hargreaves and O'Neil, 'The Importance of Music to Adolescents,' abstract.
[64] Ibid., 261.

In the other 2000 study, North, Hargreaves and Tarrant found that there was no significant difference in musical engagement between youth in America and England Their data identified the following as reasons why they listen to music:

1. Other
2. To enjoy the music
3. To relieve boredom
4. To relieve tension/stress
5. To help get through difficult times
6. To express feelings/emotions
7. To be creative/use imagination

The 'other' category, which was the top-rated response by 22.8% of the UK respondents and 34% of the US respondents, could be further broken down into: to have fun (16%) and to help fall asleep (10%).

As with prior research, the authors found that youth primarily listened to music with both friends and alone (68%), while 27.8% listened to music alone and 3.7% with friends. The addition of the choice, 'both', dramatically changed the results from their other study, where the results were clearly in favour of solo listening The authors note that the:

> Findings indicate the potential differential benefits of listening to music in different social context. It suggests that solitary listening may contribute to the fulfilment of one's emotional needs. By spending time alone, adolescents may be able to gain the affective benefits of listening to music. It may help them reduce feelings of loneliness, relieve tension, enjoy the music, and may also help them get through difficult periods…These benefits may not be successfully gained if the listening environment mainly contains one's friends: listening to music solely in the company of friends may not be conducive to the fulfilment of personal needs.[65]

Just as music's subjective meaning changes with location, it will also do so depending on the social context. We enjoy listening to music alone because it is a choice that suits our mood. When someone else determines the music we listen to, it may not be the 'right' fit, which can be detrimental to our happiness and sense of connection to it.

As the fields of music psychology and sociology move closer together, what is needed is a methodology that combines both qualitative and quantitative research.

[65] Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves, 'English and American Adolescents' reasons for listening to music,' 171.

The interviews used in sociology are ideal for providing a voice to the individual, and achieving a sense of narrative, but there should also be a place for survey data that allows for statistical analysis in an effort to determine general trends amongst groups of people. If we can effectively mesh the two, it will provide the most comprehensive view of musical taste possible – the narrative within the general, the voice within the masses.

Results

In order to determine how the general public is engaged with music in everyday life, respondents were asked to rate how often they participated in a variety of musical activities. The following chart (Table 22) shows the mean frequencies of use for all the musical activities:

Table 22: Mean Frequencies: Musical Activities (total)

Activities	N	Mean
Listen to music	1238	4.828756058
Listen to music alone	1236	4.584142395
Listen to music as background to other activities	1235	4.238866397
Listen to music on computer	1236	4.228964401
Listen to music to reflect mood	1235	3.946558704
Listen to music with friends	1237	3.620856912
Listen to music to alter mood	1237	3.594179466
Use an iPod	1237	3.377526273
Listen to the radio	1237	3.375101051
Create music playlists on computer	1236	3.348705502
If you download music, how often do you download single tracks	1231	3.289195776
Are you influenced by friends' musical tastes	1236	3.110841424
Buy CDs	1235	3.101214575
Listen to music on CD player	1235	3.092307692
Download music form legal sources	1232	3.030844156
Find new music from the radio	1235	2.879352227
If you download music, how often do you download albums	1231	2.875710804
Find new music on internet sites like myspace or LastFM	1232	2.767857143
Find new music from boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other	1235	2.718218623
Download music from illegal sources	1229	2.654190399
Make mix CDs	1236	2.614886731
Find new music from magazines/newspapers	1235	2.403238866
Find new music from TV (non music stations)	1235	2.178137652
Find new music from TV (music stations)	1235	2.110931174
Use an MP3 player (not iPod)	1234	2.025121556
Use phone to listen to music	1237	1.620856912
Use a walkman or discman	1237	1.447049313

The results demonstrate a high involvement with music. A mean frequency of 4.8, out of a possible 5, in regards to how often the respondents listen to music, is quite significant. Also of interest is the very low mean frequency for, 'using a walkman or Discman' (m = 1.45), as opposed to other mobile digital devices, such as the iPod (m = 3.38), suggesting that these respondents are very much involved in digital culture and the devices which signal full membership in the culture.

Whether or not someone uses digital mobile devices, as opposed to older technology, such as Walkmans, also appears to signal how involved someone is with music. After conducting an ANOVA test, there was a significant difference between the two groups. Of the 27 activities, 19 had greater mean frequencies for those who own digital devices, as opposed to those who did not. Three activities reported statistically higher mean frequencies for those who did not own such devices, while five did not report significant differences: buying CDs, using phones to listen to music, and finding new music from music stations. It is interesting, though, that buying CDs is something which both iPod users, and non-users participate in equally. One would assume that people using iPods would be more likely to find their music online, downloading singles, but it appears that they are just as likely to purchase CDs and rip them to their computers in order to transfer to their iPods.

Activities which reported high mean frequencies of participation by non-iPod users included: using a Walkman/Discman (Sig. = 0.0015), listening to music on a CD player (Sig. = 6.25E-08), and listening to the radio (Sig. = 0.0013). This suggests that these respondents have a more traditional relationship with music, and listen to music less frequently than iPod users. We can speculate that those more engaged with music would want greater control over their music and environment, so choose the latest technology. Interestingly, the ANOVA test shows that iPod users 'listen to music' *much* more frequently than non-iPod users (Sig. = 1.88E-07). While these results are not age specific, it will be interesting to see if there are demographic differences. It is plausible to consider that older respondents may not be as involved in new technology, as they are referenced as 'digital immigrants,' so sometimes struggle to 'keep up' with the newest of the devices. The desire to keep abreast of technological developments is often considered the domain of youth, or young

adults, who have the disposable income to support buying new technologies at frequent intervals.

The ANOVA test, between the activities and generations (split between the digital natives and digital immigrants), presents a clearer picture for the above results. Many of the activities which were more likely to be participated in by non-iPod users were the same as for those over the age of 30, or digital immigrants. In general, digital immigrants are significantly more likely to participate in the following activities as opposed to digital natives, those under the age of 30: download music from legal sources (Sig. = 0.0195), buy CDs (Sig. = 0.0026), listen to music on a CD player (Sig. = 1.23E-06), listen to the radio (Sig. = 1.22E-09), and find new music from print sources (Sig. = 00003). Of note, both generational groups have a high involvement with music at the basic listening level, with no statistically significant difference in how often people 'listen to music' at the generational level.

The similarity in the results for non-iPod users and older respondents changes dramatically when we split the groups even further. An ANOVA test in regards to the same musical activities, for those below and above 20, presents quite different results. Most notably, when the groups are further divided by age, the youngest group tends to be the most involved with music. While there was no statistical significance between how often digital natives and immigrants 'listen to music,' here we find a significant difference in mean frequencies between the groups. An ANOVA significance rating of 0.00029 suggests that those under the age of 20 listen to music statistically more than those over 20. Of the 27 musical activities, only two demonstrated a significantly higher involvement by those over 20 years old. These were: listening to music alone (Sig. = 0.000839) and finding new music from print sources (Sig. = 0.0014).

Those under 20 were more likely to participate in musical activities that could be considered 'new,' or typical of digital culture, such as: download singles, make mix CDs, find new music on the internet, and listen to music on a computer. An intriguing result was that they were also more likely to find new music from the radio, something which one would assume would be a trait of older generations. This was highlighted in the interview results as well – many of the high school students cited listening to the radio, whether normal or satellite as the primary way in

which they encountered music. It was most often listened to in the car, which raises the question of how much control they had over the radio stations being played.

The younger group was also statistically more likely to use music in regards to mood regulation. Those under 20 rated significantly higher mean frequencies than those over 20 in both: listening to music to reflect mood (Sig. = 0.000198) and listening to music to alter mood (Sig. = 0.00044). This result raises the question: why would older listeners not use music, as often as younger ones, for mood regulation? It could be hypothesized that youth are encountering a more tumultuous time in their lives, struggling to define themselves and develop a sense of self-efficacy and independence, while older listeners tend to be established and have developed other avenues to help regulate emotions. Respondents across the survey used music at a high rate of frequency to reflect (m = 3.9) and alter (m = 3.4) mood, so, while younger respondents use music for mood regulation *more*, it still remains an important aspect of music listening for all respondents.

I would consider listening to music for mood regulation as a social aspect of music, alongside listening to music with friends and being influenced by friends' musical tastes. While these activities were likely to be pursued by the youngest respondents, it is also worth noting that female respondents had the highest rate of engagement. Although the ANOVA results concerning gender and musical activity participation varied widely between age groups, females were significantly more likely than males to listen to music to alter and reflect their moods; as to why cannot be ascertained by these test results. DeNora's research on music and everyday life focused on the mood regulating aspect of music. Problematically, however, she only interviewed females, and made no distinction between how males and females might consume music. The present data suggests there may be a crucial difference. My research supports DeNora's proposition that music is important for mood regulation, but where it differs is that I find that this is true *more so* for females, than for males.

Table 23, as follows, shows the musical activities which present statistically different involvement levels between males and females, at a significance rating of 0.02 and above:

Table 23: ANOVA Results: Gender and Musical Activities (total)

Activity	Sig.	Sex
If you download music, how often do you download albums	9.03903E-16	Male
Listen to music with friends	3.17165E-12	Female
Find new music from TV (music stations)	1.10972E-08	Female
Find new music from boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other	1.16207E-08	Female
Listen to music to alter mood	2.4555E-080	Female
Listen to music to reflect mood	8.07459E-06	Female
If you download music, how often do you download single tracks	8.70465E-06	Female
Listen to music as background to other activities	2.23702E-05	Female
Find new music from the radio	2.5507E-050	Female
Find new music from TV (non music stations)	2.86846E-05	Female
Make mix CDs	0.000120650	Female
Find new music from magazines/newspapers	0.000142461	Male
Create music playlists on computer	0.000409957	Female
Download music from illegal sources	0.001853847	Male
Use an MP3 player (not iPod)	0.004441594	Male

As can be seen, males are more likely than females to: download albums, find out about new music from print sources, download music from illegal sources, and use an MP3 player that's not an iPod. On the other hand, females are more likely than males to:

1. listen to music with friends
2. find out about new music from music, and non-music TV shows
3. be influenced by their significant others in regards to musical taste
4. listen to music to alter and reflect mood
5. download singles
6. listen to music as a background to other activities
7. find out about new music from the radio
8. make mix CDs
9. make music playlists on computers

It would be difficult to state categorically from this data that females are more involved with music than males, but the inference can be made that females are more involved with the social aspects of music.

These gender differences also seem to be age-related. There are significant differences in the activities which are favoured by males over females, depending on the generation. An AVONA test, comparing digital natives and immigrants was

conducted. Table 24 shows only those results which yielded a significance rating of 0.02 or greater, in descending order:

Table 24: ANOVA Results: Gender and Musical Activities, Split by Generation

Digital Immigrants	Activity	Sig.	Sex
	If you download music, how often do you download albums	2.11851E-12	Male
	Find new music from magazines/newspapers	6.29788E-12	Male
	Download music from illegal sources	3.41081E-06	Male
	Listen to music on computer	0.000118853	Male
	Listen to music with friends	0.000194618	Female
	Download music form legal sources	0.001056233	Male
	Are you influenced by friends' musical tastes	0.004266686	Male
	Use an iPod	0.005254454	Male
	Listen to music	0.009742157	Male
	Create music playlists on computer	0.013045655	Male
Digital Natives	**Activity**	**Sig.**	**Sex**
	If you download music, how often do you download single tracks	2.18463E-09	Female
	If you download music, how often do you download albums	1.75162E-08	Male
	Listen to music to alter mood	1.92705E-08	Female
	Find new music from TV (music stations)	6.91991E-08	Female
	Listen to music to reflect mood	7.51763E-07	Female
	Make mix CDs	2.32322E-06	Female
	Create music playlists on computer	2.82237E-06	Female
	Find new music from the radio	4.29841E-06	Female
	Listen to music with friends	1.10377E-05	Female
	Find new music from boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other	2.34785E-05	Female
	Find new music from TV (non music stations)	4.65565E-05	Female
	Listen to music as background to other activities	0.000418983	Female
	Listen to music on CD player	0.001762856	Female
	Listen to the radio	0.008716199	Female
	Use an MP3 player (not iPod)	0.013120742	Male
	Download music from illegal sources	0.013844408	Male
	Use an iPod	0.015819495	Female

The data shows that for digital immigrants, the only musical activity which females take part in, significantly more than males, is ‘listening to music with friends’ (Sig. = 0.00019). Males above the age of 30, on the other hand, are more likely to engage in 9 of the 27 activities, including:

1. downloading albums
2. finding out about new music from print sources
3. downloading illegally and legally
4. listening to music on computers
5. influenced by their friends' musical tastes
6. use an iPod
7. listen to music
8. create playlists on computer

This list differs from the results across the entire survey, in that creating playlists and listening to music with friends, were activities more likely associated with females.

The ANOVA test results for digital natives are even more distinct. The only two activities which males take part in more than females are: using an MP3 player and downloading music from illegal sources. As can be seen from Table 24, digital native females have higher significance ratings for the majority of activities, including listening to music to alter and reflect mood and downloading singles. This could be viewed as a reflection of stereotypical gender associations with genres, in that females, especially younger ones, tend to enjoy pop-based genres, while males listen to rock-based ones. Rock genres, and their quality of authenticity, are more focused on the album as a concept; while pop styles are more singles-oriented in order to keep the fans perpetually engaged. This indirectly supports long-held stereotypical beliefs that associate young girls with ephemeral pop, and males with album-based 'authentic' rock styles.

With an ANOVA test between those under and over 20, even more inconsistencies with gender difference in musical activity involvement come to light. The most obvious is the basic activity of 'listening to music.' In the original ANOVA test with all respondents, there was no gender difference. When a distinction was made between digital immigrants and natives, older males were more likely to listen to music more often; but then, in dividing this between those above and below the age of 20, younger females were statistically more likely to listen to music than males below 20. The same test also showed that males over 20 are more likely to listen to music more often than females in the same age group. Clearly, there is a shift in musical involvement taking place between the youngest respondents, and those in their adolescence and beyond. This is not to say that older females are *not* listening to music at all, as the activity still rates an extraordinarily

high rate of mean frequency (m = 4.77), but compared to males of the same age group (m = 4.86), the difference is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.0028). Perhaps the reason is culturally based, with the expectation that women will bear and raise children, work outside the home, maintain the home, and be involved in community and health related activities; music would be a backdrop to their very busy lives. Males have stereotypically focused on their careers and leisure activities, which included music. Time commitments to job and family have different expectations for men and women, especially in older generations. This would also explain why females over the age of 20 are significantly more likely to be influenced by their romantic partner's musical tastes, than males of the same age (Sig. = 3.62E-06).

The results of the ANOVA tests, split at both the +30/-30 and +20/-20 levels, indicate that older females are less involved in musical activities than older males. Interestingly, younger females, especially those under 20, appear to be more involved with musical activities than males of the same age. What is causing this difference is an area for future study: is it merely that females grow out of their musical engagement, or do males become more involved at a later age, and will these changes still occur when the digital natives 'grow up', or will digitality result in further decreasing gender differences and distinctions?

In all versions of the ANOVA test, as noted above, it appears that females, especially those under 30, are more likely than males to use music as a form of mood regulation. In the interviews conducted with high school aged students, when asked how they picked what song choice, both males and females reported 'mood' most often. Answers included:

> **Male/15/Canada**: It definitely depends on my mood. Like, if I'm really upset, or I miss somebody, then I'll listen to something, like an old Dave Matthews song, or something like that. And then if I'm really pumped, or something like that, it's normally Iron Maiden or music like that.
>
> **Female/13/Canada**: Whatever mood you're in.
>
> **Male/15/Canda**: Whatever I like listening to. Whatever mood I'm in, or what I feel like listening to.
>
> **Female/15/Canada**: Depends on my mood.
>
> **Male/17/Canada**: Whatever I'm in the mood for.

Male/12/UK: Kinda what mood I'm in, really.

Male/15/UK: I think it depends on what mood you're in…well, if it's like, night, you want something to get ready, something a little more dancy, but if it's in the morning, you want something a bit more calm.

It seemed as if 'mood' was a blanket term to describe most reasons for listening choice. Because most of these youth carried digital listening devices with them at all time, they were able to choose songs specific to their emotional needs. They could instantly play what they wanted, providing a soundtrack for their life, mood, and their experiences.

In speaking with these youth, there did not seem to be discernible differences between the males and females that would make one conclude that one group used music as mood regulation *more often* than the other. What did arise was that these females seemed to have a much stronger *emotional* connection with music. Perhaps this was because the girls were willing to open up about their emotions and musical tastes to a female interviewer. During the interviews, the young women were more likely to: go on at length about their moods and how it related to musical choice; feel emotional connections to songs; and feel emotional connections to musical artists. For example, Emily[66], a grade 12 student, found music helped her deal with difficult situations, and was integral to shaping her personal and political beliefs. Unlike most of the other students, though, Emily and her friend Jenny (grade 11), frequently participated in online forums in order to find others who shared her beliefs and tastes in music, something that they could not find in their small town. In regards to online forums:

Jenny: I went on it because I like the band AFI and I signed up to their fanclub. It's just a great place where all the fans can connect and talk about, you know, AFI and a lot of other things, too – threads that talk about everything else and other bands. You learn more about each other and you connect on a different level. Good place to meet friends.

Emily: Yeah, because there's hardly anyone here [Burns Lake], like, if you counted all the kids in our school that we can connect with at all, there's probably, like 2 or 3. There's some things I can't talk to people about – like they're just too different on certain topics with me – like, if our views are different on things I can't talk to them. And, like, there's only about 2 or 3

[66] Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

people that I can actually connect with in town here. And it's nice to know that there's other people outside our little bubble here.

Jenny: It's like a great extended family.

As for political beliefs:

Emily: I know that before I listened to a lot of music, I didn't really figure out who I was – I was just kinda falling around, like trying to fit in, whatever, and then you listen to a band and you just think "This is me. This is who I am. This is what I like." And you just kinda grow off from that. And I know that listening to music got me thinking more about religion and politics and the problems of the world, because some of the bands that I listen to do address that sort of stuff. And it got me interested and it made me think that maybe there is something more than going through life as just a person, and trying to do something more, like making people care.

This sense of having strong personal ties to music was also expressed by some younger girls, especially Theresa and Isabelle, both in grade nine. For them, music is their 'life,' something that helps them to understand and get through difficult emotional periods:

Theresa: I think music is life. You can express yourself through music in so many ways and I just can't go without music. There's always something going on in your life, and you might as well… have music help you out.

Isabelle: Especially when you can't talk to somebody that you need to, like, my mom and stuff. I can't tell her the way I feel because it'll make her upset and madder at me, so I go in my room and I listen to things that express the way that I feel and I try to tell her through blaring my music and letting her listen outside my door to what the lyrics are. And sometimes she slams on my door and tells me to turn it off. Or sometimes, she, like, knocks real quietly, and I'm, like "Yeah?" and she's, like, "I didn't know." It's totally how you express yourself.

The interviews with the youth were quite exploratory and, as such, any responses given about emotional connections with music tended to be through spontaneous disclosure. They were not specifically asked whether or not they had an emotional connection with music, but merely about the process in determining song choice.

With the online interviews, respondents were directly asked to respond to the statement: *I have an emotional connection with music; it occupies a lot of my time*. In general, I was surprised at how open people were in talking about their emotional

connection with music. There was not one respondent who disagreed with the statement: 'I have an emotional connection with music'. The way in which the respondents talked about how music helped them through the day, how it was like a friend, or allowed them to foster connections between other humans, was extremely positive and encouraging. The responses can be grouped into four main categories, which will be discussed below, but one respondent, in particular, summarized the general sentiment when he wrote:

> **Male/20/San Francisco, USA:** Agreed, music is a form of communication that pre-dates language and I feel it can have a tremendous emotional and spiritual connection with anyone. I personally have a HUGE emotional connection with the music I listen to. Music can alter the mood I am in, make me think about issues I haven't thought of before, help me get through hard times, and enhance good times. A good example of this emotional connection was the first time I ever listened to the album New Wave by Against Me! I remember every song gave me goose bumps and sent shivers down my spine. I just kept thinking "WOW! This is really incredible I've never felt this before." Something in the combination of beats, lyrics, and melodies just made my body physically react and made me feel amazing inside.
>
> Music definitely occupies a lot of my time. I'm always on the quest for new music; I have a very serious addiction. Like a junkie always searching for that next great high, I'm constantly searching for that next great record. I download tons and tons of music almost everyday and I am constantly listening to it. I listen to music on my way to work, while I'm at my desk at work I sit there and listen to music, then I leave again and I listen to music in my car. It's a constant for me. I feel like music really lives with me in my car though. I drive anywhere from 400 to 600 miles in a week, that means I have a lot of time spent in my car just driving listening to music and that's where it feels most at home.

As noted, this respondent captured the essence of most of the responses. Generally, four main themes emerged from this statement, with a number of subcategories. These include:

1. Those that listen to music all the time
    a. Music can be conceived as a drug-like metaphor
    b. It's absence can be very much felt
    c. It is something listened to in the background to other activities
2. Those that have an intense emotional connection with music
    a. Music corresponds to memories
    b. People form strong connections to music
    c. Through music, people form strong connections to others
3. Those that use music for mood regulation
    a. Music can be used to alter mood
    b. Music can be used to reflect mood

4. Those that feel an emotional connection to music, but do not spend a great deal of time listening to it.

(1) Those that listen to music all the time

The majority of respondents felt that they listened to music all the time, to varying degrees. Time was not equated with emotional connection, though, as respondents often listened to music as a background to other activities or, alternatively, as a companion in their daily lives. As for those who made blanket statements regarding listening to music 'all the time,' answers included:

> **Male/29/Tevl Aviv:** It occupies a lot of my time. But I don't know if it's an "emotional connection". It's just an important part of my life. I enjoy it and it interests me a great deal.
>
> **Male/23/Ediburgh, UK:** Agree. It occupies all of my time.
>
> **Male/42/Akron, USA:** This could not be more true. I've been a music fan and a musician for as long as I can remember. I listen to music all day, even at work

The process of enjoying and listening to music, however, can become such an integral aspect of people's lives that they listen to it at an almost unconscious level. There were a number of respondents who discussed their relationship with music as if it were a drug, something that they could not live without. I would hesitate to call this an addiction, as that signifies a negative implication, but can one be addicted to music and, could this addiction potentially become harmful? Fortunately, these respondents seemed to demonstrate a healthy attitude to music, in which it is incorporated into their everyday lives without hindering other social and personal relationships. The following respondents demonstrate a high level of engagement with music; for some, it is something which they *must* do everyday, and for others it has become their entire raison d'être. There are varying levels of 'addiction,' but the general theme is that music is something which they could not live without:

> **Female/19/Missouri, USA:** Yes, yes, yes, a million times yes. I can hardly go half an hour without listening to music. You know how some people are afraid of the dark? I can handle dark. Pitch black dark. But if it's silent, I just go crazy. I definitely have an emotional connection with my music. Some songs make me laugh, some make me cry, some make me smile, some make me remember, some make me forget, but almost all of the are special to me in some way.

Female/29/Oswego, USA: As far as I can remember there was always music in my parent's house and it's always been with me. Even when I'm not at work I've got the stereo going or someone's playing guitar or working on a song…Music is quizzes when you're bored, movies when you're watching tv, frustrating when you can't find the right chord and spend all day on it, drinking music, fucking music, sad & lonely and happy & whole music. It works like a drug, bringing me up when I want it and bringing me down when I need that. Just like the pusher, you can mellow out or tear it up but without the chemicals. The buzz you get from watching someone nail a solo or have an amazing night on stage is incredible. It'll push 20,000 people into a frenzy if it's magic out there or on record. It does things to your soul that nothing/no one else can. The closest I can come to any explanation of it is what the religious feel. It's not only like going to church, but it's having God come down from heaven and pulling you into his lap.

Male/34/Dublin, Ireland: I try to listen as much as possible. Music is better than anything really.

Female/28/Edinburgh, UK: Music, and how we make music, does occupy a lot of my time…I think about it often, how we make it, or why we don't, what makes someone feel they can't call themselves a musician even when they are and why we, as humans, need it. And it just feels so damn good.

Male/26/Maryland, USA: In high school and college, the emotional connection was probably unhealthy and occupied way too much of my time. I'm a bit more balanced now.

Similar to the music as drug-metaphor way of engaging with music, a number of respondents noted that music is something which leaves a noticeable feeling of absence when it is not heard. It seems that we have become accustomed to music being the backdrop to our lives, something which has been made possible through the development of recording and playback technologies, and enhanced with portable playback devices such as the iPod. The desire to have a personalized soundtrack means those moments without music leaves us feeling a sense of loss and unwanted quietness:

Female/41/Sechelt, Canada: I have always had music in my life and it is a large emotional part of my life. I have been through periods of time that I have had music in my life and found there was something missing. I was not as happy as I could be.

Female/46/Chicago, USA: Music, music-related activities, and music-related purchases make up the bulk of my life. I can only go so long without hearing music before I feel the effect of its absence.

The final subcategory for those who stated that they listen to music 'all the time,' is those who listen quite frequently, but usually as a background to other activities. Often due to time constraints, these respondents would *like* to listen to music with their full attention, but cannot find the time to do so. On the other hand, multiple respondents seem to enjoy listening to music solely as a background to other activities, as it helps to pass the time, and makes other activities more enjoyable. For this group, music is used to enhance daily life. I would hypothesize that most people would report listening to music in this fashion, if they were asked directly.

Female/27/Abbotsford, Canada: I do listen to music a lot. I wouldn't say it "occupies" my time, but rather accompanies me in whatever activity I may be doing at the time…be it cooking, reading, driving…I have it on most times.

Male/44/St. Catharines, Canada: I often have music on while I'm doing other things. In fact, I find that this is my primary connection with music. I rarely sit down and listen to music. Whether or not this is due to predilection or lifestyle [busy father of two] I cannot say.

Male/26/Vancouver, Canada: I am listening to music as I fill out this survey. It does occupy much of my time in transportation, study, work, and otherwise.

Male/36/London: I always like to have music on when I'm on my PC or in the car or walking to work.

Female/27/Boston, USA: I listen to music pretty much all day long. I am a professor. I listen at my desk in my office at school. I have it on my computer when I'm working, etc.

Male/45/North Shields, UK: Sometimes music is just aural wallpaper, deployed because I prefer to not work/read without background noise. I tend not to sit down explicitly to concentrate on listening to music.

According to my Last.fm profile, I've listened to some 26,000 tracks since August 2004, which translates to about 16 tracks a day on average. This number counts only music tracks, excluding podcast listening. If I'd spent that time solely listening to music that would be quite a chunk of time, but as I say the majority of that music listening would have involved my doing something else at the same time. (For the record, none of that listening takes place while I'm at work: given the nature of my job, I can't listen to my iPod – or any other source of music, come to that – during working hours.)

Male/30/Edinburgh, UK: Music is very important for me, I listen a lot while working, walking, relaxing etc; it keeps me good company…

(2) Music and emotional connections

The fact that people foster intense emotional connections with music is nothing new. The power of music to engage the emotions has been written about, and seen in practice, probably since its inception. Important facets of music are the relationships formed, both with it and, subsequently, with other people, through shared musical interests. Music engages memories, evokes emotions, and draws us together in social and personal settings. More recently, both music psychologists and sociologists have explored the emotional quality of music. There has been a call within musicology, led by Ruth Finnegan, to explore the emotional context of music, to look past its cerebral qualities to the undercurrents that affect us at our base levels.[67] In the interview responses, while no one stated that they did not have an emotional connection to music, the majority had an intense emotional connection, which was very important to them. For some, music is what maintains them and structures their life, while for others, even if music was not a large part of their lives, they still felt connections with certain songs, as they brought up pleasant memories, emotions, or reminded them of connections they had with particular people in their lives. Before exploring the subcategories for emotional engagement, the following respondents noted an emotional connection with music, or that music is very important to them:

> **Male/30/Mexico City, Mexico:** It is one of the most important aspects of my life.
>
> **Male/41/Minneapolis, USA:** Absolutely. I can't imagine life without music.
>
> **Female/26/Prince George, Canada:** STONGLY AGREE. Music has had a profound impact and place in my life for as long as I can remember and I don't ever see that changing.
>
> **Female/36/Raleigh, USA:** Music is an emotional thing for me and therefore I am very choosy about what I listen to and when.
>
> **Female/54/Burns Lake, Canada:** Of course there's an emotional connection to music. It makes us feel alive – it helps us remember and be connected to events and people.

[67] Ruth Finnegan, 'Music, experience and the anthropology of emotion,' in: *The cultural study of music: a critical introduction*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2001): 181–192.

The above quote leads us into the first subcategory for emotional connections with music – the use of music in memories. Just as DeNora, sociologist, and North and Hargreaves, psychologists, found that memory formation and maintenance was an important aspect of musical engagement, the interviewees often cited memories as a way for them to engage with music emotionally, as with smell, hearing a song precipitated memories in an autonomous response. Most respondents mentioned either pleasant or general memories, while one remarked that music helped him remember an unpleasant moment, or relationship:

> **Female/35/California, USA:** I listen to music most of the time, either while driving, working, writing, etc. Songs have connections to other memories and are definitely very emotional for me.
>
> **Male/57/San Jose, USA:** Music is a great representative of my past and I really like the old artists the new music is not quite as enjoyable to me.
>
> **Female/24/Sydney, Australia:** So many defining emotional moments in people's lives are recalled via music. It's literally the man-made soundtrack to our lives.
>
> **Male/65/Robert's Creek, Canada:** Well, yes. I have an emotional connection with many specific songs rather than an emotional connection with music in general. For example: Elton John's "Your Song" always reminds me of an old girlfriend (Wanda) who dumped me while that song was playing!
>
> **Male/43/Spokane, USA:** I associate many epochal memories w/ the music that was important to me at the time.
>
> **Male/21/Boston, USA:** It's true. I've spent an immense amount of time selecting and grooming my music collection, and so it means a great deal to me. Likewise, many songs hold a certain importance, be it because they remind me of someone, sometimes, or just because they speak to me. I am kind of insulted when someone doesn't like my musical tastes, mostly because I find myself so vested in my music.
>
> **Male/32/Maryland, USA:** I have attached memories to songs and bands. I'll be listening to a mix, or the radio and a song will come up, (i.e. Man in the Box, Alice in Chains) and I'll remember a specific place and time in my life. Other than music, they only other way for me to recall far lost memories is through smell. In general I don't remember things well and use music as a lifeline to my past and a path to my future.

The ability to form memories linked to songs and artists has no doubt been affected by the advent of recording devices and playback.

The current ubiquity of music, due to technological advancement, almost guarantees that music will be playing during key moments of our lives. The emotions we associate with these memories are quite personal and add to the subjective nature of our tastes and definitions of genres. So, how do mobile devices, such as the iPod, impact the creation and remembrance of memories associated with music? For one thing, they allow us to recapture that feeling and memory at any given time, by listening to a particular song. It also brings a sense of solidarity and maintains the personal in the memory. One can use headphones to enjoy a personal memory, without the intrusion of others into their mental bubble – there is no need to share the memory with others, and thus it remains important and cherished. Also, the technology can aid in the production of new memories. The sharing of headphones can be seen as an act of allowing another into one's 'bubble' – thereby allowing one a glimpse of musical tastes, something which is often seen as quite personal. This act can bring people closer together, strengthening social relationships, thereby building new memories and connections.

The connections we form with the music, itself, can also be quite personal. No two people will react to the same song exactly alike. Our memories, personality and identity each colour the way we engage with music, and others. For the following respondents, music is a constant companion, something akin to a good friend. For some, this connection is fostered through specific artists; for others, it is in the way that music inspires movement:

> **Female/29/Edinburgh, UK:** I only have an emotional connection with music when I am really in the zone while dancing. If I'm not moving, I'm not having an emotional connection. Sometimes I listen to music while I'm running, but most of the time I get sick of listening to music this way. I would need new music to start enjoying this experience again. Most of the songs I listen to are from other phases of my life, but I find that people aren't singing songs…about experiences that I can relate to. I used to like Ani DiFranco for this. There aren't enough female experiences that can come through the music industry I suspect because so much of it is built on male taste.

> **Male/16/Burns Lake, Canada:** Yes, I'm a musician and when I'm not listening to music I'm playing it; Sometime both at the same time. When I'm writing music I try to put emotion into the song, I think that's what makes a song good or bad really. If people connect with a song I write, I think my Job has been done.

Female/27/Montreal, Canada: I am a popular music scholar; I have hundreds of CDs and thousands of songs in my iTunes library. I have worked three years in a major music store here in Montreal during my undergrad years and my friends consider me as an "encyclopedia". I listen to music roughly from 8-9 in the morning until 9-10 in the evening.

Male/49/Ottawa, Canada: Well, yes. I'm a Curator of Music. I'm a musician. I'm married to a musician, another ethnomusicologist like myself. I work with other musicians. That's a given.

Male/30/New Jersey, USA: Friends and places come and go – but music is the bedrock throughout your life, you can listen to something new or something old. Music is one of the few constants in all of life.

Similarly, music can help foster relationships between people, through shared musical interests or by memories associated with songs and people. Playing music together can have the same affect. This type of response was less common, but I would argue that, if asked directly, people would agree that music has the ability to bring people closer together. It connects shared experiences, strengthens bonds, and is a beginning point for some relationships. As some of the respondents noted:

Male/28/Madrid: I like a soundtrack to a situation, my girlfriend and I put on an album as soon as we get in the door, we met because of an overlapping CD collection, in fact, now that I think about it, most of my adult relationships have a basis in shared or opposing musical tastes…

Male/31/Ontario, Canada: I always have music on, house, car, work, working out, sing along with my daughter. Although she is almost 4 I see how passionate she is about music already and I assume it is because of me singing and playing it for her all the time.

Male/62/Park Forest, USA: In college I spent more time with music than with studies. The stereo is on when I am home & awake. Music helps make & maintain connections with family & friends. My internal life with music has help me stunt my socialization & socializing.

(3) Music and Mood Regulation

A large number of high school and on-line interviewees, both male and female, elaborated on how mood affected what they listened to, and why they listened to particular songs. Although the concept of mood regulation can be further split into mood reflection and alteration, most of the respondents did not mention *how* music corresponded to mood. Mood seems to be a generic term to loosely describe how one engages with music. As noted:

Male/29/Edinburgh, UK: Depends on my mood. Definitely very important though.

Female/26/Ottawa, Canada: I definitely choose music based on my mood. I wouldn't say it occupies a lot of my time as much as I'd say it influences or improves my time. I spend a significant amount of time seeking out new music, but mostly I listen to music while I'm doing another activity concurrently.

Male/29/Edinburgh, UK: My connection with music can be described in different ways and "emotional" is but one of them. I often listen to music for the way it gives me access to the affective aspects of my personality. I can reflect on, explore and work on particular moods, attitudes, emotions preoccupying me. Music occupies a fair amount of my time, but I would like to spend more time listening to it.

Male/35/New Zealand: I definitely have an emotional connection with music. During periods of difficulty music can relieve stress and elevate my mood. I would prefer to listen to music over most other activities.

Those who were specific about mood alteration included:

Male/22/New York, USA: Music is probably the most important thing in my life, and nothing else can change my mood in the way that music can.

Female/28/Moncton, Canada: Heck yes, when I feel like garbage, I listen to music that supports that, And if I'm feeling like I need a little uplifting, I'll listen to happier music…Music is a connection to the soul I find, Especially folk.

Male/39/Warrington, UK: Music is nothing if it is not emotional, and increasingly I explicitly use it as a mood-modifier.

Male/16/Albemarle, USA: Definitely! Music certainly can change your mood or even personality some songs really can speak to me and I have it on all the time.

And for mood reflection:

Female/22/Kelowna, Canada: I do feel an emotional connection with music; I usually listen to music that reflects how I'm feeling at the time.

Female/39/Fairfax, USA: I'm not sure I could get by without music in my life. I have playlists to accentuate my moods: Classical Best, Sing-a-Long Songs, Anti-Depressant, Top Rated

(4) Those connected to music, but it doesn't occupy a large amount of their time

The final category is those who felt a strong connection to music, but did not spend a lot of time listening to it. In general, people felt that they did not have the time to sit down and really focus on music; the fact that they did not listen to very much music, however, did not diminish their strong emotional connection to it, or that it is a very important aspect of their lives. As noted above, no respondent stated they did not enjoy music or have some connection with it. While some people prefer to listen to music as the background for other activities, others felt music deserved their full attention, within given time constraints. In their own words:

> **Female/32/Aberystwyth, UK:** It doesn't occupy a lot of my time, but I do have an emotional connection with music, in that it does evoke or connect with particular feelings or emotional experiences within me. This is quite a hard one to discuss, really: I'm not sure how I would describe my "emotional connection" with music – I just know it's there, in varying ways/shapes/forms, every time I listen… You can have a strong connection with music but still not listen to it often! For example, the connection might be so strong, or so negative, that you can't bear to listen. Alternatively, you might listen to music all day every day but not connect with it very much at all (I'm thinking of when I used to work in retail and the music became a background sound…)
>
> **Male/24/Austin, USA:** I think I listen to music far less than most people. I do connect emotionally, but I am pretty busy most of the time and just never think to turn it on.
>
> **Male/37/Bowling Green, USA:** Definitely…but with my workload, I'm very constrained by time. I don't have enough chances to immerse myself in music.
>
> **Male/34/Bremerton, USA:** I do have a strong emotional connection, however I find that as busy as my life is these days I do not have the luxury of being able to sit down and FOCUS on music anymore, not like I used to anyway. Between work and family at home, and so many interests and hobbies, music has become an activity best multitasked with another non-audible activity (such as working at my desk, driving my car, working out in a gym.) I cannot think of the last time I sat and just LISTENED to music, and not been doing something else at the same time.

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There is no doubt that music is an important process, or even ritual, in many people's lives. Even when it is not occupying the full attention of the listener, it is guiding social behaviour, encouraging or discouraging social interactions, and imprinting on the production of memories. Music can bring people together by its reflection of

identity; sharing one's tastes with another is essentially sharing a facet of one's identity, and a very personal one at that. The next chapter will explore the concept of identity formation and music, from both a qualitative and quantitative methodological standpoint – effectively sharing individualised narratives within general societal trends.

1.3: WHAT ARE PEOPLE LISTENING TO?

In Chapter 1.1, it was shown that identity markers, such as age, gender, educational level, and occupation status, taken individually, do not necessarily determine taste, but, together, create a cultural map correlating identity with taste. Chapter 1.1 examines these variables in respect to general activities, while this one explores what people are listening to in regards to genre distinctions. Literature in the field has not reached a consensus as to genre definitions, which is reflected in the interviews conducted for this study. A problematic relationship has developed between scholars and mainstream consumers; while scholars are keen to impose rigid genre definitions and correlate them to identity markers, consumers are more fluid in how they define their musical tastes and listening styles. Subjectivity is a difficult concept to explore and define, and in terms of music, expressing how one feels about music styles and their preferences can become onerous.

While music was not a critical marker of distinction for Bourdieu, his work has since been extensively cited and applied to musicology studies in an effort to correlate socio-economic status and academic levels with genre preference, further supporting the high/lowbrow dichotomy. Bourdieu's survey data indicated that increased cultural capital correlated with a preference for more complex artistic music. While Bourdieu maintained that one required specialized education to fully understand a work of art, is this applicable to a culture of digitality? I would contend that, as with the general activities, genre preference has lost much of its correlation to class. Genres typically associated with the lower, or less educated classes, are enjoyed by all, but I believe that those associated with high art, such as classical music, still reside with the upper classes. Comprehension of some highbrow genres, such as art music, is perceived to be for academics[68], but those with the desire, can access the required information to become reasonably knowledgeable in that field. The internet provides a wealth of information, most often for free, for those keen enough to acquire it. While I do believe that one needs certain knowledge sets to *fully* understand a work or art/piece of music[69], they are not necessarily tied to social

[68] Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Allen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

[69] 'Full' understanding of a musical work is a complex notion. How can *anyone* fully understand a work? Even the composer him/herself may not fully be aware of the subconscious elements they

or academic qualifications. As well, knowledge sets have no bearing on the simple enjoyment of a piece of music.

Popular music tastes, something which is largely ignored by Bourdieu, also maintain their own set of distinctions and value judgments which, as with high and low art, exert their own form of influence over personal identity. Status cannot be understood as a dichotomy, but rather as a continuum or spectrum: just as those of high social standing do not fit neatly into the genre of art, or high-culture music, neither do those of lower socio-economic status fit neatly into pop and rap music, as we each have the freedom to pursue and enjoy our likes. Digitality is inherently about choice and the eclecticization of taste. Access to inconceivable amounts of online information and music is creating a climate in which the genre one listens to does not necessarily equate to being of specific social class, or having rigid identity markers. It has, however, become important to acquire the gatekeeping skills needed to determine base levels of personal taste, regardless of genre-association.

Using Bourdieu as a starting point, a number of studies have since been conducted, which examine various social factors and their potential impact on genre preference. Most notably, music psychology has provided numerous studies which correlate musical preference with age, race, education, lifestyle choices, and social standing. While these studies have been invaluable in providing important statistical information, many have come up with inadequate generalised definitions for the genres, which do not take into account the individual's agency when defining genres.

As with the sociological literature on the determinants of taste in regards to everyday life, those in music psychology are debating which social process is predominantly affecting musical preferences. Occupational status, educational levels, and age seem to be the main contenders, but it is more likely a combination of these factors. Early studies by LeBlanc were predominately focused on age as a marker for taste in regards to one's acceptance of musical styles. He conducted numerous studies to examine how one's tastes expand and contract during the life

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wrote into the piece. I suppose people can fully understand the compositional structure (harmonies, instrumentation, and the like) but to *fully* understand a piece, I feel that social and cultural indicators must be taken into place, as well as the intention of the composer. Often the intention of the composer and a piece's reception are entirely different – but this does not necessarily mean that people do not fully understand said piece, it's more a case that emotional reactions to music are fairly subjective; sounds will effect everyone differently, and the relationships one forms with music are varied and subjective.

cycle.[70] In 1996, LeBlanc et al., created a study that examined listeners across a wide age-range, to determine how they responded to three styles of music: art music, traditional jazz, and rock[71]. Their hypothesis was proven correct, in that there is a 'preference curve' for taste in which youth is open to any style, but gets more demanding as they age, and then finally become more accepting as they reach old age – synonymous with youth, middle and old age. While all three genres followed this preference curve, the one for rock music was flattened, as the 'results suggested that rock music was rather well liked across all grade levels measured and that the preference for rock changes slowly and gently across different grade levels'[72]. As for jazz music, their data 'indicates that traditional jazz was unpopular at the middle school or junior level, but it was especially appreciated by the college students. This would fit the widely held belief that jazz is a style favoured by people who have a higher level of education'[73]. While their findings are useful, especially as they relate to music education and the need to expose children to musical listening education at a young age, it will be interesting to see how these results have been affected by a culture of digitality. My data suggests that young students are listening to an incredible amount and variety of music, but it is yet to be determined if this is making them more or less accepting of a wide variety of genres. I would hypothesise that genre distinctions are becoming less important.

A more pressing issue with LeBlanc's study, that plagues many in this field, is his definition of genres. Splitting the music field into only three genres, traditional jazz, rock and art music, is tricky enough, but how he defines these genres is problematic. For the study, pieces of music from each of the three genres were played and respondents asked to indicate their preference. The problem is, while the pieces were, no doubt, from the stated genres, as per LeBlanc's definition, they were not necessarily representative of the genres. The wide variety of styles within each of those broad genres could potentially have an impact on the issue of identity formation; for example, people may only be interested in certain styles of rock music, and have placed their own personal value judgments on them. Also,

[70] Albert LeBlanc, Wendy L. Simms, Carolyn Siivola and Mary Obert, 'Music Style Preferences of Different Age Listeners,' *Journal of Research in Music Education* 44.1 (Spring, 1996): 49-59.
[71] Ibid., 49.
[72] Ibid., 56.
[73] Ibid., 56.

memories and associations with the songs being used in the study could dramatically alter a person's preference. In the rock category, for example, the examples were predominantly from the 1960s and 1970s, so older respondents would most likely have more of an emotional response and relationship with these songs, as they were popular in their youth. Adolescents, regardless of whether or not they associated their musical tastes with rock, may rate their preference for these particular songs as low, because of their parents, a social group they may not wish to be linked with.

Another article from 1996, using comparable surveys conducted in 1982 and 1992, by Peterson and Kern, also examines the potential for one's tastes to expand or contract. The article, *Changing Highbrow Taste: From snob to omnivore*, locates the shift in taste with age, but only as one of a variety of social elements, the others being: social structure, values, art-world dynamics and educational levels. They hypothesised that the American public has undergone an historical shift from highbrow snob to omnivore. Their definition of highbrow is 'operationalized as liking both classical music and opera, and choosing one of these forms as best-liked among all kinds of music' and 'among highbrows, the snob is one who does not participate in any lowbrow or middlebrow activity, while the omnivore is at least open to appreciating them all'[74]. The research indicated that a significant shift occurred between the tests conducted in 1982 and those in 1992, in that those classified as highbrow in 1982 had broadened their musical preference towards that of omnivore in 1992. Their results also give weight to my theory that those with high social class standing are able to explore more lowbrow activities, without fear of losing their cultural capital. What this article alludes to, is how this omnivore-ness has come to replace snobbishness; this ability to seek out obscure acts in any genre and proclaim them as good has almost become a new form of highbrow. As well, a predominately male phenomenon that is related to traditions of record collecting[75] and indie culture[76], is seeking out the most obscure unknown band before they become famous, and sharing that information with their peers.

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[74] Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern, 'Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore,' *American Sociological Review* 61.5 (October, 1996): 900-901.
[75] Will Straw, 'Sizing Up Record Collections: Gender and Connoisseurship in Rock Music Culture,' in *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, ed. Sheila Whiteley (New York: Routledge, 1997): 3-16.
[76] Ryan Hibbett, 'What is Indie Rock?' *Popular Music and Society* 28.1 (February, 2005): 55-77.

Peterson and Kern's article has been instrumental in guiding other music psychologists and sociologists in terms of correlating taste with class. Scholars, such as Katz-Gerro and van Eijck, draw on the omnivore theory to guide their theory that class is no longer a primary determinant of taste. The study is interesting, in that it draws on results from identical surveys conducted in both 1982 and 1992, allowing for a direct comparison between tastes. The way in which they differentiate between highbrow and lowbrow is thought provoking:

> *Highbrow* is operationalized as liking both classical music and opera, and choosing one of these forms as best-liked among all kinds of music. This measure appears to be a valid index of being highbrow because those respondents we labelled highbrow attended performances of plays, ballet, classical music, musicals, visit art galleries, and attended opera significantly more often than did others in the sample… we operationalize *omnivorousness* as a variable that can be measured as the *number* of middle- and lowbrow forms respondents choose…Five music genres are considered *lowbrow*: country music, bluegrass, gospel, rock, and blues. Each of these genres is rooted in a specific "marginal" ethnic, regional, age, or religious experience.[77]

Class is not necessarily present in their definitions, but specific identity markers do guide the results of their musical genres, which could be perceived as class markers.[78]

Their results indicate a fairly specific cultural map, not unlike the one produced in Chapter 1.2 for those who listen to highbrow genres:

> In both years (1982 and 1992) highbrows, on average, have about two years more education, earn about five thousand dollars more annual family income, are about 10 years older, are more likely to be White, and are more likely to be female than are others in the sample. All of these differences are statistically significant. Neither highbrows nor others, however, are more likely to be currently married.[79]

Peterson and Kern's results support their hypothesis that omnivorousness is replacing snobishness among Americans of highbrow status. That is not to say that *all* highbrow-associated respondents in 1982 had become omnivores be 1992, but it

[77] Peterson and Kern, 'Changing Highbrow Taste,' 900-901.
[78] Peterson and Kern's results indicating that respondents who enjoy classical music and opera (highbrow tastes) are more likely to attend ballets, art galleries, plays and opera are similar to the data found in the current study concerning everyday tastes and music correlations (see Chapter 1.1).
[79] Peterson and Kern, 'Changing Highbrow Taste,' 901.

was a statistically significant number. Of importance, Peterson and Kern note that omnivorous taste:

> Does not signify that the omnivore likes everything *indiscriminately*. Rather, it signifies an *openness* to appreciating everything. In this sense it is antithetical to snobbishness, which is based fundamentally on rigid rules of exclusion.[80]

The problem with this statement, however, which the authors allude to, but do not fully address, is that *how* people are consuming these genres is not taken into account. While the respondents may be exposed to more genres, any changes in their consumption pattern will depend on social status, personal subjectivity, levels of irony, and other identity indicators. How often, and why, are two completely different questions concerning people's musical tastes that need to be addressed. Peterson and Kern entertain a variety of reasons as to why highbrow respondents have become more accepting of a wider variety of musical styles: social, structural change; value changes towards greater tolerance; generational and status-group politics; and changes in the definition of art worlds. What they do not address, however, is the sheer amount of music being created in 1992, as opposed to 1982. As technology and music dissemination techniques increased, so did the actual amount of music available to the consumer, as well as the proliferation of genres. 1992 was prior to the explosion of internet use for music downloading, listening and sharing, so the exposure to, and acceptance of a large variety of musical genres will no doubt continue to rise.

Bethany Bryson's response to the Peterson and Kern article was, *What About the Univores?* (1996), which examined Peterson's theory of omnivores/univores and hypothesised that Americans with low-levels of education would more likely exhibit group-based, musical taste distinctions. While Peterson focused on the omnivorous, high status individuals, Bryson focuses on those of low status, who Peterson refers to as the univores, 'who are *believed* to adhere to more specific sub-cultural spheres defined by race, age and region'[81]. Bryson, instead, argues that low status individuals construct groups based on their *dislikes*, rather than musical *likes.*

[80] Ibid., 904.
[81] Bethany Bryson, 'What About the Univores? Musical Dislikes and Group-Based Identity Construction among Americans with Low Levels of Education,' *Poetics* 25 (1997): 142.

Bryson's research supported her theory that low status individuals have a greater formation of taste distinctions in association with group identities, but only in the case of race, ethnicity, religious conservatism and geographic region. No correlation was found between tastes distinctions and age or gender. As noted by Bryson, 'that is, age and gender have important overall effects on musical taste, neither is marked as significant *additional* taste differences among less educated respondents'[82]. Of interest to this chapter, though, is that although Bryson decided to use genres instead of specific songs, I find her classifications quite problematic, and would argue that her results regarding gender would be significantly different had the genres been classified differently. While Bryson does take into account a wide variety of genres, the classification of pop/rock as one genre, ignores the stereotypical female/male dichotomy for music preferences. There is much literature within musicology[83], which the popular music press reinforces[84], that pop music is 'meant' for girls and rock for boys. Ignoring this difference would, no doubt, have profound effects on the results for gender distinctions.

One of the more interesting, and effectual studies on music taste is North and Hargreaves', *Uses of Music in Everyday Life* (2004). Instead of relying on the individual's self-perception of musical preference, this study focused on what individuals were *actually* listening to, and why. They sent a text, once a day at random, in which individuals were asked to report: what music they could hear at that moment; where they were; and why they were listening to it. While people only reported hearing music approximately 36% of the time, it was found that people mostly encountered popular chart music in their daily lives. North and Hargreaves provided a fairly comprehensive selection, with 16 genres. There were a variety of

[82] Ibid., 148.
[83] Mavis Bayton, *Frock Rock: Women Performing Popular Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Nicola Dibben, 'Representations of Femininity in Popular Music,' *Popular Music* 18.3 (October, 1999): 331-355; Norma Coates, '(Re)volution Now? – Rock and the political potential of gender,' in *Sexing the Groove*, ed. Sheila Whiteley (London; New York: Routledge, 1997): 50-64; Suzanne Cusick, 'Gender, Musicology, and Feminism,' in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicolas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 471-498; Sara Cohen, 'Popular Music, Gender, and Sexuality,' in *Pop and Rock*, ed. Simon Frith and Will Straw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 226-242; Joanne Hallows, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Keir Keightley, 'Reconsidering Rock,' in *Pop and Rock*, ed. Simon Frith and Will Straw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 109-143.
[84] Melissa Avdeeff, 'From girl next door to sex symbol: Representations of Women in the Popular Music Press' (MA dissertation, McMaster University, 2006).

pop styles, including chart pop, alternative pop, and golden oldie pop. Rock was given a solitary category, while rap, R&B/soul and dance all received separate ones. The fact that chart pop accounted for 38% of the listening occurrences essentially renders most of the other categories irrelevant, as there were no other genres which stood out as being statistically significant. The next, highest rated genre was R&B/soul with only 8.4%.

What North and Hargreaves' data on genre demonstrates is a clear preference for and exposure to chart, pop music. This was also found in the interviews I conducted with the youth – even with the immense amount of music available on the internet and elsewhere, most students still rely on traditional means, such as the music charts, to determine their listening taste.

Results: General Tastes

In order to account for the wide variety of genres, the genre preference section in the current study availed itself of what could be seen as an extreme number of genres. Respondents were asked to rate how often they listened to each of 86 genres on the same five-point Likert-style scale used throughout the survey, ranging from never to very often. The large number of genres was used in order to get a more definitive sense of what people are actually listening to, rather than generic categories, to develop a comprehensive cultural map. Of course, it is not realistic to define *an individual's* musical taste accurately, or to map those unique tastes onto wider cultural trends, but I hope to convey some of the diversity within these broad genres as a way of articulating a more individualized approach to musical taste analysis. Table 25 shows the genres used in the survey, in descending order of mean frequency.

Table 25: Survey Responses: Genres (total)

	Genres	N	Mean
1	Rock	1109	3.970243
2	Singer/songwriter	1125	3.242667
3	Pop	1112	3.136691
4	Indie rock	1126	3.108348
5	Classic rock	1128	3.100177
6	Soundtracks	1106	2.743219
7	Brit rock	1124	2.674377
8	Punk rock	1035	2.673430
9	Punk	1035	2.619324
10	Brit pop	1125	2.616889
11	Classical	1116	2.616487
12	Blues rock	1126	2.607460
13	Folk	1115	2.555157
14	Progressive rock	1125	2.510222
15	Jazz	1115	2.495964
16	Dance	1114	2.485637
17	Top-40 pop	1127	2.485359
18	Hip hop	1128	2.455674
19	Hip hop/rap	1117	2.442256
20	Electronica	1126	2.407638
21	Indie folk	1126	2.404973
22	Non-musicals film soundtracks	1124	2.386121
23	1970s punk	1035	2.358454
24	Heavy metal	1128	2.340426
25	Post-rock	1116	2.329749
26	Blues	1115	2.328251
27	Contemporary folk	1127	2.307897
28	Country	1115	2.307623
29	R&B	1128	2.302305
30	Orchestral	1127	2.289264
31	Traditional jazz	1130	2.258407
32	Musicals soundtracks	1126	2.246892
33	Country rock	1128	2.239362
34	Funk	1127	2.219166
35	Motown	1126	2.215808
36	Rap	1129	2.200177
37	Techno	1129	2.193091
38	Reggae	1112	2.189748
39	Traditional folk	1126	2.156306
40	Contemporary jazz	1130	2.144248
41	World	1101	2.143506
42	Old school rap (80s)	1129	2.139061
43	Classic blues	1128	2.125887
44	Glam rock	1125	2.113778
45	Easy listening	1117	2.106535
46	R&B/soul	1110	2.097297
47	Euro pop	1124	2.080961
48	Disco	1128	2.063830
49	Girl groups	1129	2.063773

It is interesting to observe that half of the top ten preferences would previously have simply been classed as rock. Especially of note are: the placement

of singer/songwriter as the second most-listened to genre, one which has not been considered in any music preference studies to date; and soundtracks as number six, which is not even considered a genre of music, but a group of diverse sounds and styles used merely to enhance films and television programs. While defining genres is complex enough, attempting to do so for soundtracks, which have no familiar musical features, is more challenging. Genres such as soundtracks rely on familiar relations and folksonomies[85] to describe how music is interpreted throughout online radio and internet forums.

This begs the questions: are genre distinctions becoming irrelevant; is iPod culture promoting a culture of eclecticism, where people feel free to listen to a wide variety of genres without associating themselves with one or two main ones; can this be characterized as Peterson's notion of the omnivore; and with the immense amount of music available online and elsewhere, how is this affecting people's relationship with specific genres? Table 25 shows that, besides standout genres such as rock, people, in general, have diverse musical tastes. Although Table 25 does not account for classifications such as age, gender, or class, it does demonstrate a general levelling of music preference across most genres. The mean frequencies are quite low across the entire section, but quite similarly rated overall.

I find that genre definitions are becoming less relevant in regards to how people define music and, in turn, how they define their relationship to their musical preference; but I still cannot justify going so far as to say that genres are totally irrelevant. There is a tension between narrowing the definition for genres and doing away with them altogether, but in doing so, we are left with no basic categorical differences. While for most, it may be difficult to define the difference between folk and folk rock, the distinctions are clearer between country and rap. The problem rests with songs that blur the boundaries, hence the need for new genre distinctions or, alternatively, the re-defining of genre distinctions as our society becomes more homogeneous and our tastes more eclectic and less dependent on stereotypical identity markers. The internet affords users the ability to access an absurd amount of

[85] Thomas Vander Wal, 'Folksonomy: Folksnonomy Coinage and Definition,' posted on *vanderwal.net* on February 2, 2007, http://www.vanderwal.net/folksonomy.html; Gene Smith, 'Folksonomy: Social Classification,' posted on *atomiq* on August 3, 2004, http://atomiq.org/archives/2004/08/folksonomy_social_classification.html.

music; sites, such as MySpace and YouTube, do not organize their music into genres which I find opens up the possibility for people to look outside their musical comfort zones, into unknown artists and genres. Endless encounters with music also encourage more listening experimentation, increasing the void between genre importance and irrelevance.

The difficulty in defining genres, as well as categorizing their preferences, was addressed by a number of respondents:

> **Female/27/Canada**: Your different genres are way too confusing! How am I supposed to understand the difference between Hip Hop/Rap, Hip Hop and Rap?
>
> **Male/42/Canada**: This list is a study in itself - for we genre theorists, at least...
>
> **Male/37/UK**: These genres are too vague to be meaningful. If I like the Sex Pistols, are they punk, punk rock or 1970s punk? Or all three? Is U2 religious or Christian Rock or just rock? Or indie rock? Way too vague to say anything with a great deal of confidence for most of it.
>
> **Male/41/UK**: Sorry, I can't define some genres. Some others are mixed or undefined (i.e. orchestral rock with classic music)
>
> **Male/60/UK**: i think you have too many categories i go by artists
>
> **Male/59/Canada**: I listen to all kinds of "popular" music (non-classical/art music) for both professional/academic reasons (teaching and research) and personal enjoyment. Some of what I listen to professionally I would not listen to for enjoyment! I would add to the above list, although it's not really a genre, most kinds of music that are "political" or socially conscious - i.e., it's often subject matter that interests me, rather than genre.
>
> **Female/38/Canada**: I listen to a lot of bands that cross/mix world/popular music, which I find hard to classify into a genre: e.g., Banco de Gaia, Groove Armada, Gotan Project, The Cat Empire. I also listen to punk cabaret and that kind of thing: e.g., The Dresden Dolls, Rasputina
>
> **Female/32/UK**: I have no idea what you mean by most of these terms or the boundaries/categorisations they represent, so I have only ticked a selection when I was relatively sure I did or didn't listen to it. I don't know where the bands and music I listen to would fall within your terminology, so my answers probably don't capture my music listening accurately (or at best, are a bit of guesswork).

Male/44/Australia: I don't really classify music, I listen to what I like and that generally covers orchestral, rock, jazz blues electronic dance music and art music. I just like music...

Female/23/Canada: Genre is problematic, and something I don't pay much attention to.

Male/43/UK: Genre definitions are notoriously subjective (for instance I would call most of the stuff I like "pop" and that includes Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra, Hank Williams, The Beatles, T Rex) but for the purpose of this survey I've taken it to mean a narrower range of acts that marry harmony and melody (e.g. Fleetwood Mac, Todd Rundgren, The Raspberries, The Hollies, The Beatles, New Radicals, etc). Most of my Don't Know answers mean I don't understand what the genre is.

Many respondents felt the need to quanlify what they meant by their genre selections:

Female/28/UK: This was a hard one to fill out, and I'm not sure how you'll deal with the results. With some of these, I don't even know what they are. With others, I almost feel I should be able to qualify what is meant or included/excluded. I don't know if something is religious music if the singer/songwriter is religious and includes some of their beliefs in their lyrics. (Am thinking of people like Xavier Naidoo from Germany.)

Male/40/USA: Shoegaze (Ride, My Bloody Valentine)

Male/40/Canada: n.b. I listen to “religious” music in the sense that some of the “classical” I listen to is ecclesiastical.

Female/37/Canada: Is klezmer music “religious” since it's Jewish? There are many different world genres to tease apart.

Female/54/Canada: is Christian worship music considered religious? if so then change my choice to very often.

Male/22/USA: For Pop I'm referring specifically to Miley Cyrus/Hannah Montana and Hilary Duff; for Religious I'm referring to ~1500yrs of Western music

Male/32/UK: By R&B do you mean REAL R&B or the rubbish they make these days? :)

Male/21/Canada: By “TV Soundtracks” I really mean “Anime OSTs” but that's a fairly fine distinction, I suppose.

Male/44/Canada: by “new age”, I mean Eno, not f***ing Kenny G or stupid “nature” music... Also, “Jazz” = Zorn, Frith, etc

A number of respondents were quite clear in their feelings about the subjective nature of genre definition. There is also a tension between those who align themselves with mainstream genres, such as pop and rock, and those who focus on obscure subgenres. This still does not fully answer the question of whether or not genre labels are important, or immaterial, but this is where I believe it is heading. As iPod culture becomes more embedded in our culture and psyche, genre definitions, as well as ways to organise music, will change accordingly. As well, with fewer people buying CDs in analog form, the need to have genre distinctions at the consumer level decreases exponentially.

These sentiments were also mirrored in the Favourite Musical Genre section of the survey. Before completing the genre preference section, respondents were asked to list their three favourite genres. This question was optional, but received 1,066 responses: 689 (64.7%) answered with a mainstream genre, whereas 377 (35.4%) answered with a subset, with few repeat responses and some quite obscure genres. Rock took top place, followed closely by indie/indie rock. Table 26 shows the breakdown for the top genres.

Table 26: Survey Responses: Number 1 Favourite Genre Selections

Genres	N	Percentage of Total Responses
Rock	189	17.7
Indie/indie rock	134	12.6
Alternative/alternative rock	89	8.3
Pop	56	5.3
Rap/hip hop	34	3.2
Metal/heavy metal	32	3
Folk	30	2.8
Country	29	2.7
Classical	28	2.6
Electronica	24	2.3
Punk	24	2.3
Jazz	20	1.9
Total	689	64.7

Strangely, although the preference for rock is a constant in the survey results, the singer/songwriter genre is noticeably absent. Although it ranked second in the list of preferred genres, only six people declared it as their number one choice. Singer/songwriter did not place very highly in people's second or third choices, either. Overall, respondents chose the generic categories as their top choice for favourite genres. This, combined with the high response for indie music, leads me to believe that people are fairly diverse in their actual music preferences, and that they are not necessarily thinking in terms of genres when describing what music they like.

Indie music has a complex history in regards to a definition. Originally meaning music that was on independent labels, it has since come to have multiple definitions, depending on which clique you are in, but for the general public, it seems to be defined merely as counter to mainstream, i.e. Top-40 chart music. Basically, any artist not on the Top-40 chart music list could be considered indie, regardless of whether they are represented by a major or independent record label. This is not necessarily a great definition, but one which is gaining a lot of cultural sway. People who may not want to associate themselves with pop music, for whatever reason, state that they like indie as a way to disassociate themselves with mainstream pop, as well as being able to encompass a wide variety of styles in their preference choice. This leaves us with the question, what is indie, and does it even matter? It would appear that we are moving towards defining our tastes by artist, or even song, rather than by genre.

Genres: subjectivity and variety in definitions

In the follow-up interview questions, respondents were asked to respond to the statement: *I tend to stick to one type of music…* While the majority stated that they did not stick to one type of music, and for the most part would listen to anything, key trends did emerge. These included: (1) those who would listen to anything, regardless; (2) those that mentioned specific genres/artists in their preferences; (3) those who felt their preferences have changed with age; (4) those who felt their preferences changed according to mood/location/other outside factors; (5) those who were confused about genre classifications; (6) those who would listen to everything, except a few specific genres; (7) those who go through fads/phases in their musical tastes, and finally, (8) those who only listen to one type. This is not meant as a way

to essentialise one's experiences with music, though, but merely a representation of the various answers the interview statement received. Many responses could fall into more than one category, while others do not fit accurately into any.

(1) Listen to anything, regardless.

As for those who would listen to anything, responses included:

> **Female/41/Canada**: My taste is music has always been vast. I love mostly everything.
>
> **Male/27/United Arab Emirates**: I listen to what my ears smile to.
>
> **Male/34/UK**: I listen a lot, to a lot of different genres.
>
> **Female/26/Canada**: I love many many different kinds of music.
>
> **Male/54/Sweden**: I do indeed listen to most kinds of music, and if I hear something I really don't understand or like I go to great pains to learn and find out what it's for – my basic hypothesis if that people don't do music to create misery and pain, but because they indeed think it's good (for something…although the qualities can be really, really difficult to find and appreciate something – it might take a bit of work…)

An overwhelming majority felt that they listened to all kinds of music and that their tastes were quite diverse. This supports the theory that an eclecticization of tastes, or cultural omnivorism, is occurring in digitality, and that genre classifications are, indeed, becoming less salient. The sheer volume of music available via the internet is exposing people to music outside their usual comfort zone, so that it begins to lose its traditional consumer labels.

(2) Specific genre indications

Genre classification was still important to a large number of respondents, though. Following those who would listen to anything, the next largest group was those who listen to a wide variety of music, but who also mentioned specific genres/artists in their answers. Many of these respondents made it clear that their tastes were eclectic, acknowledging various genres which would not normally be thought of as compatible. This could be due to the shuffle effect with iTunes or iPod devices, which allows one to shuffle through entire catalogues of music in a random fashion, ultimately juxtaposing diverse genres in a way that previously would not have been possible. People have become quite accepting of, and enjoy this lack of history within music playlists:

Male/25/Canada: I like a lot of different kinds of music. I'm a big fan of Messaien and the Pet Shop Boys, and it wouldn't be unusual for me to listen to both in one day, even consecutively.

Female/23/Canada: My plist on random goes from NIN's Starfuckers Inc to Handel's Messiah to Sarah McLachlan to My Chemical Romance to Debussy to Rankin Family to Jpop to deathboy.

Male/43/USA: I listen to everything from 70s punk to steampunk to classical to rock to country…I won't listen to stuff I don't like in order to fit in.

Male/16/Canada: I listen to everything from death metal to folk, I don't limit myself to one genre, that would be like only eating steak, you got to have a good ceasar salad to complete the meal.

Male/42/USA: I listen to everything from indie rock to jazz to country to Afrobeat.

Male/20/USA: I listen to all kinds of music. I have about 90 GB's of music on my hard drive that really ranges from rock, pop, rap, country, techno, metal, indie, big band etc. I love all kinds of music and don't think you could classify me under one genre…I like any music that sounds genuine and sincere to me.

While others, when mentioning genres, stuck to a specific few:

Male/37/USA: I tend to listen to lots of indie music, but of several varieties.

Male/65/Canada: I'll always be a 50s 60s 70s rock 'n' roll / pop music fan and proud of it. Quite simply, the songs of those eras had a melody line and a simple –easy-to-listen to story line. I mean "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" ~ we've all had that feeling.

Male/22/Canada: I just can't stay away from prog rock. I'll always enjoy it.

Male/47/Canada: I really like a wide variety of music, and am deeply moved by a wide variety of music, but I study reggae (among other non-musical topics), and host a reggae music radio show, so my actual listening practices at present are heavily skewed to that genre and its affiliates.

Listing specific genres was mostly a male phenomenon, which could possibly relate back to album collecting, as a male phenomenon, and the importance of specific knowledges[86]. The male respondents clearly felt more of a need to display their

[86] Will Straw, 'Sizing up Record Collections'; Frith, *Performing Rites*; Keightley, *'Reconsidering Rock*'; Holly Kruse, 'Abandoning the Absolute: transcendence and gender in popular music discourse,' in *Pop Music and the Press,* ed. Steve Jones (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

knowledge about music and musical genres, whereas the females were more likely to say they enjoyed everything, or mentioned specific bands/artists.

(3) Tastes change with age

A small number of respondents focused on how their tastes have changed with age, with some stating that their musical tastes were secured during their twenties. This would make sense, as identity formation goes through a discovery period, starting with the teenage years, and then starts to become more solidified during the twenties, but it is, a lifelong process. The memories and relationships with music, as they relate to life experiences, would undoubtedly remain with you throughout life, and are something you would turn to throughout:

> **Male/30/UK**: I try to listen to different stuff, but I have become more selective over the years, so I turn to the music I like (at least to put on my MP3)

> **Male/62/USA**: Through my mid-twenties radio stations to which I listened played all jazz, rockabilly, traditional country & rock 'n roll. My parents listened to classical music. I can, however, recall my parents laughing at Little Anthony & the Imperials "Shimmy, Shimmy, Ko-ko Bop," & telling me about a song from their youth "I Wish I could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate," which my father proceeded to sing while attempting to shimmy.

> **Female/32/UK**: I think I just keep listening to the music that I "settled on" in my late teens/early 20s: I don't feel like my tastes have changed much, though I am perhaps less likely to put on as much hard rock as I would have been then (the "folk" singer/songwriter style has won out over time!). The most significant change in my music "library" (to borrow an iTunes term) has been the addition of big-band swing music to my music collection. I have become more interested in it as I have learnt to dance lindy hop and balboa over the past few years.

(4) Tastes change from outside factors

Similar to the above category, a group of respondents felt their musical taste changes, or has changed, according to various outside factors, such as location, mood, and occupation. As our environments change, it would naturally follow that our relationship with music also would, as a way to adapt to new experiences and people:

> **Female/28/UK**: I listen to a variety of music and have started listening to more since moving to Edinburgh. Also, my job as a music teacher has me constantly listening to a large variety of music.

> **Male/29/UK**: I do not stick to one type of music. My interest in different styles, sounds, eras intensifies or changes as a result of many factors, such as access, knowledge, surprise, spontaneity, nostalgia, age.

Female/24/Australia: …working in the music industry and interacting primarily with music aficionados, I am constantly exposed to a wider range of music than 95% of the human race. Yes that sounds conceited, but it's somewhat true… Personally I'm a huge fan of Tool & Slayer, but I reckon next week's My Morning Jacket show will reduce me to tears and I can't get enough of Aussie hip-hop, Midnight Juggernauts, or TV on the Radio.

Female/26/Canada: I listen to many types of music, but it just depends on the mood I am in or the activity I am doing while listening to music. If I am exercising I listen to Britney Spears and The Pussycat Dolls, and other pop music that I would normally never listen to otherwise, but listen to it then because it has a good beat.

(5) Confused about genre distinctions

It was highlighted by many respondents in the follow-up interview that people are confused about genre distinctions. People are unsure of how to classify what they listen to, probably because of the cross over between genres. The subjective nature of genre definitions was addressed by respondents, often through an awareness that their peers either do not understand their tastes in music, or might define genres differently to them. Although those who mentioned liking specific genres tended to be males, those expressing confusion in how to define genres had a fairly equal distribution between males and females:

Male/23/UK: I'm really not sure what you mean by type of music, but I try to listen to as much as possible.

Male/31/USA: It depends on how widely you classify genres. I actually consider my musical tastes quite narrow (American popular) but many people believe that if you listen to more than three types of American popular music, you have "eclectic tastes." I like indie rock/"singer-songwriter" and some hip hop, with an affection for 80s pop and a bit of hard rock. But I don't necessarily consider that eclectic.

Male/29/Amsterdam: I do prefer lots of different types of music ranging from jazz to hip hop to rock to metal to chart pop to soul etc etc. however I do find myself listening mostly to rock or rock-oriented pop (genre-classifications are always difficult!).

Female/27/Canada: Well, it depends what you mean by "one type of music". If "one type of music" is all contemporary popular music since 1955, then, yes I tend to stick to one type of music (basically: "rock music"). But in this contemporary popular music done since 1955 there are all kinds of music : rock, pop, rap, heavy metal, techno…I basically enjoy all that, and tend to

judge songs instead of musicians (for example, I don't hate all of Celine Dion's repertoire…I do enjoy some of her songs).

Male/21/USA: My music is certainly mostly related, and someone who didn't like my musical choices would probably say they were mostly similar sounding, although I certainly would be able to differentiate them…That being said, while most of my music falls under one genre, I do listen to a good deal of instrumental symphonic band music, which is definitely another genre. Maybe that makes me weird, but that's what I like.

(6) Listen to everything, except a few specifics

The smallest category of listeners would be those who listen to everything, except for a specific few genres. While I suspect that more people feel this way than actually reported, only a select few stated this sentiment in their answer. Most people, when asked, will say that they listen to everything out of ease of answering, but I would argue that genuinely liking every genre of music is quite rare. For those falling into this category, answers included:

Female/26/Canada: I tend to love ALL types of music, while about 5 main genres are on my regular play lists.

Female/46/USA: Though there are some genres I don't listen to because I have liked little to no music I've heard in that genre, I do have a relatively wide variety of music tastes so I would not say I stick to one type of music.

(7) Fads and phases

The category of people whose music tastes vary according to phases or fads, was also quite small, but again, I would argue that this is probably a more accurate way for people to describe their listening habits. Just as tastes change, according to outside factors, such as mood or location, the same holds true for those who are easily swayed by fads, and are seeking a certain acceptance. As someone is made aware of a new artist or genre, they immerse themselves in that music, but quickly move on to the next artist. This can be seen throughout society, in that children are being raised in a culture that is fast paced, without ample time to digest new information. These phases and fads have a clear progression, as can be seen with the following respondents, with phases lasting a day or so for the 19 year old, to a few weeks/months for the 24 year old, and to a few years in the 28 year old:

Female/19/USA: I definitely do not stick to one type of music. I listen to rock, country, 80s, and pop music. My favourites are Taylor Swift and Theory

Of A Deadman. I will agree that sometimes I get stuck on a genre for a day or two.

Male/24/UK: I have a habit of rotating through different types of music. I'll latch onto something for a few weeks or months, actively learning more about the genre and major artists until either I get bored or something else catches my eye. There's this really interesting Last.fm tool that visualises the relative amount of each artist you're listening to at any given time, showing how the trends change over time, but I can't remember what it's called. One of the guys I'm living with at the moment is only into electronic/trance music and I have to admit it's made me more aware of the genre, but I still listen a lot to the acoustic singer-songwriter stuff I was always a fan of. I think it depends how much music forms your social identity. For me my friendships aren't based on cultural tastes much but I remember how in high school, it played a big part in our friendship circles to follow the same tastes in musical tastes. Call it cliché but it's true, teenagers do use music as a part of displaying their identity and showing the group they identify with the most. I wonder if it would be interesting to see if young people have lots of "hidden tastes" or music they like but don't admit to when they're with their friends, for fear of being made fun of for liking it, like a kid who plays hip-hop on his phone at college but likes to listen to the beatles when he's in bedroom, that sort of thing.

Female/28/Canada: I go in fads, one year I surround myself with certain genres, and then I switch it up depending on my mood…but lately I've been stuck on the folk-type music…I'd say for the last 2 years

The increased length of musical phases with age correlates to previous answers identifying age as a determinant of musical preference. As was noted above, respondents felt that their tastes were solidified in their twenties, a time in which one's identity also becomes more settled. Younger agents are in an age of exploration, of both music and identity, and, as such, would search through different styles at a much faster rate in order to 'find themselves.' As one gets older, the search for an identity becomes less immediate and hasteful, leading to prolonged phases in music preference and taste in general.

(8) Listen to only one type of music

The last category is those who stated that they only listen to one type of music. Although there was no one who genuinely thought they only listened to one type, there were those who quantified their yes response by stating they were open to suggestions from friends and family. It would be quite difficult, in theory, to listen to only one type of music, as people are exposed to wide varieties in the public domain, through work, Muzac, friends, restaurants, etc. While we may, or may not,

enjoy the music we hear, it will affect us, nonetheless, as well as affecting how we position ourselves within our immediate environment. Also, with the argument that people are less aware of genre distinctions, they may not even realise that they are listening to more than one type. This acceptance of other people's tastes was expressed by:

> **Female/27/Canada**: I do tend to stick to one type of music, but I do like many different types.
>
> **Female/24/UK**: I tend to stick to one type of music (classical)…although I do like to listen to other people's music.
>
> **Male/22/USA**: I do tend to stick to one type of music, and generally look to people online for music recommendations and preferences. That said, I'm generally open to many types of music and am willing to listen to a variety of genres.
>
> **Male/56/Edinburgh**: My main preference is the Classical genre (which includes "serious" music from time immemorial to the present day), however I also work in Music Theatre, Jazz and Pop professionally.
>
> **Male/31/Canada**: I stick to what I like and I am open to listening to a friend's music but I would never play it on my own if I didn't like it

***

This section explored the survey respondents' subjective relationships with a variety of musical genres, including how they define their tastes, how diverse or singular they are, and their general acceptance of various genres. The results give a sense of the fluidity and diversity of musical tastes, as people were given the freedom to be honest and open in their definitions and preferences. The following section explores the issue of taste from a psychologically-based analysis. Drawing primarily on the survey data, musical tastes are explored through various identity markers, such as age, gender, education and occupational status.

1.4: MUSICAL TASTE AND IDENTITY: A CULTURE OF ECLECTICISM?

Music and identity have a symbiotic relationship, with music being a critical signifier of identity, and identity shaping what we listen to[87]. Performers and artists, through their medium, portray what is happening in society, but also influence culture and identity formation through their works. Because we realize, interpret and interact with our environment through a lens based on our personal and societal lived histories, it makes sense that music should have an influence in the creation of this lens, or 'habitus.'

This chapter will focus on the relationship between iPod culture, digitality, and identity formation, as it relates to music, to assess how digital culture is affecting the way people interact and identify with music, others and themselves. I would argue that a sense of eclecticism encouraged through digitality[88], is creating a new aesthetic, in which people feel free to listen to a variety of genres, rather than one specific style. If our tastes are becoming increasingly eclectic and individualized on a personal level, it should follow that this is undermining societal norms and creating a culture where musical tastes are less rooted in class. This ideology can then be extrapolated to identity formation.

The chapter begins with a psychological examination of identity markers and musical taste, based on age, gender, education, occupation, and martial status. As with Chapter 1.1, long-held genre and identity stereotypes will be explored through statistical data analysis. Following this, the chapter moves into a more sociological examination of identity formation, as it pertains to tastes in music, which is an important marker of identity. In a society where people are free to explore their tastes through a vast quantity of available music, it needs to be determined how this potentially impacts on identity, and whether a fragmentation of on-line identity affects the eclecticization of musical taste and identity.

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[87] Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves and Dorothy Miell, *Musical Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Debra Grodin and Thomas Lindlof, *Constructing the Self in a Mediated World* (London: Sage Publications, 1996); Mark Fenster, 'The Problem of Taste within the Problematic of Culture,' *Communication Theory* 1.2 (1991).

[88] David Weinberger, *Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder* (New York: Times Books, 2007); Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Culture is Killing our Culture and Assaulting our Economy* (London; Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2007).

Review of the Literature

The literature on music and identity is quite similar to that on taste and everyday life, as music is an important aspect of everyday life. It would be quite rare for someone not to be exposed to some form of music daily, whether it was their personal choice or not. Music penetrates our lives, helps manage our behaviours and mood, and organises us. The issues that were relevant to taste and everyday life are, therefore, pertinent here as well.

As discussed previously, in reference to everyday life, Bourdieu's examination of taste in *Distinction* succeeded in bringing much attention to the field of cultural production, and how class can be considered the main signifier of taste. His main point that 'taste classifies and it classifies the classifier,'[89] has had a lasting affect on the social theory of music and is still very applicable to contemporary culture, even if the influence of his focus on the importance of class has waned. While Bourdieu's structuring of taste, through class, still retains some relevance with the increased democratization of taste made possible through the internet, class lines are becoming less pronounced and important.

Bourdieu's association of class with education level, though, can still be seen as relevant to an understanding of music, as it pertains to the individual. Bourdieu argued that one must possess knowledge of a piece of music, in order to understand its 'true' meaning, and that this knowledge would be gained through education.[90] I would argue that while there is merit in Bourdieu's belief, the education required is not necessarily as formalized as that which Bourdieu implies. Knowledge is exceedingly available to the public through mass media, such as the internet, magazines, television, etc, and is no longer restricted to academia. Within the main geographical scope of this project – the UK and North America – comprehension of highbrow genres, such as art music, still tends to be within the domain of academics[91], but those with the desire can readily access the required information to become knowledgeable in that field. I would contend that the distinction between

[89] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 2.
[90] Ibid., 2.
[91] I use the term 'comprehension' quite hesitantly. There are undoubtedly many non-academic people engaged with high-brow music at a high level, but their 'comprehension' of the works involved may be limited. For the purpose of this discussion, comprehension is defined as specialised knowledge of specific musics, for example, the theory, history, and musical construction of said works (knowledges which are generally taught within the academy).

highbrow and lowbrow is becoming less of an issue than it was when Bourdieu wrote *Distinction*. Popular music tastes, largely ignored by Bourdieu, also maintain their own distinctions and criteria which, it could be argued, exert more control over personal identity than those for high or low art. Cultural markers sit on a continuum, and are not absolute dichotomies: social standing does not always signify leisure activity and musical style choices, as people have the freedom to enjoy many options.

One has to question whether it is *essential* to have the appropriate knowledge in order to understand a piece of music, or work of art. I think there is some merit to the idea, but that does not mean that someone who does not possess the knowledge cannot *enjoy* the music or art. Also, as noted above, it is not necessary to acquire this knowledge through an academic institution, although there is still a sense of arrogance for those who have. However, in some social circles, street knowledge is more important and desirable. While knowledge of popular music lacks the distinctions found in highbrow music, such as the classical music canon, and struggles to be taken seriously in some academic circles, its study has value, in that it affords us an insight into societal norms and identity formation. The distinctions between different knowledge sets should be acknowledged, and given their due credibility. Just as one may not fully comprehend or appreciate a Beethoven symphony, without knowledge of its time and place, others may not fully understand a Lady Gaga music video, without an understanding of today's youth culture. Both require certain knowledge for a full comprehension, both for their musicality, but also their place in society, yet the latter remains fixed with a lowbrow stigma and, therefore, not as warranted for study by academia.

Bourdieu gave credence to the view that popular culture is associated with low culture and not worthy of academic study. His class-based analysis of culture and taste was solely focused on how different classes consumed art goods, and dismissed popular culture as neither worthy, nor a justified marker of taste identity. I would argue that identity has to be oriented within popular culture, as it is a defining marker of the current society, which is ever changing. It can be assumed that most people would rather listen to the popular music of their day, than art music. It would be interesting to research if there are class-based distinctions within popular music

styles, as there are between popular and art music. Popular music, by the very nature of it being the most listened to, may be seen as a democratic art form, but we also have to wonder if there is a hierarchical element because of the different genres. As reflected by Bennett, 'it may carry just as much kudos at a dinner party to show that you know the current line-up of the Spice Girls as to know the name of Philip Glass' latest composition'[92].

Other studies since Bourdieu have argued that, while class is an important signifier in taste formation, it is not the primary one. Factors, such as age, lifestyle, gender and education, can be considered as important as class, if not more so. While there is a deficiency in large-scale studies concerning taste and identity formation, there have been a few published articles. As these articles essentially give an overview of previous ones, I will offer a brief synopsis.

Bryson, in 1997, affirmed the view of class-bound taste aesthetics, by arguing that the tastes of those in the higher classes were broader than those in lower classes. Bryson recognized class as a primary signifier, but also advocated for the notion that we must consider alternatives to class, as a way to highlight differences between social groups and identities.[93]

Organizing taste determinants by social group is useful, but it will always stereotype people within a specific framework, whether they entirely fit the criteria, or not. While class is a preference for categorizing, as it can have very unambiguous boundaries, such as yearly income, perhaps lifestyle choices is a better determinant. It would also be interesting to see if age has a greater impact on taste formation than class. Social mobility allows people to leave their class boundaries, but does it necessarily follow that they will adopt new tastes, or continue to be influenced by their prior likes? Tony Bennett notes that preference for musical styles remains relatively set from late adolescence into adulthood[94], which leaves the question of musical taste formation before adolescence and its life long impact.

Regardless of whether musical taste is determined by our social makeup, it positions us in our environment, and marks us as members of a particular group.

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[92] Tony Bennett, Michael Emmerson and John Frow, *Accounting for Tastes: Australian Everyday Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 200.
[93] Bryson, 'What about the Univores?'
[94] Bennett, Emmerson and Frow, *Accounting for Tastes*, 178.

While these groups are not predominately based on social class or age, but rather on musical preference, the influence of our habitus also cannot be disputed, or minimized:

> Cultural choice positions us: it tells us and others who we are, and it defines for us and for others who we are not. It sorts us into "kinds" of people. Although these kinds come to seem "natural", they have everything to do with the organization of the social…What is at stake in cultural choice, then, is not simply differences in taste but the ability of the dominant class to impose the value attributed to those differences, in such a way that some choices count as "legitimate" and others lack legitimacy.[95]

As Frith notes in *Performing Rites*, we assume to know someone by their musical tastes; they define us, and position us in the world.[96]

A number of scholars, examining musical taste from a psychological perspective, have approached the subject from a fairly wide vantage point. Where sociological studies have focused on specific identity markers of taste, such as Norma Coates on gender and Bennett on age, psychological studies seem to incorporate multiple identity markers, to give an overall map of taste and cultural upbringing. These include work by Bryson, Peterson and Kern, Chan and Goldthorpe, whose approaches to taste and everyday life have been discussed in Chapter 1.1. In relation to music, their results provide interesting insights into the field, although the same issue plagues their results, as with those for tastes and everyday life – *which* identity indicator affects taste the most. Conflicting reports deem various identity markers are more important, yet none seem to hold the stance that they cannot be understood as distinct from one another, but are interconnected in a complex cultural map.

A common theme throughout the more recent studies, however, is that those of higher social standing and educational levels tend to have more omnivorous musical tastes than their social counterparts.

1. Education

The majority of studies on taste and social status seem to find statistically significant correlations between high social standing and the consumption of highbrow activities, or, in relation to the omnivore-univore theory, the consumption of a wide

[95] Ibid., 8-10.
[96] Frith, *Performing Rites*, 5.

variety of activities, including those considered highbrow. The assumption is then made that the alternative must be true – those of lower social standing have lowbrow tastes and stick to fairly few musical choices. There has been significantly less focus on the tastes of those with low social standing.

One article, in particular, which seeks to rectify this, is Bryson's article, 'What about the univores? Musical dislikes and group-based identity construction among Americans with low levels of education.' Basing her research on Peterson's 1992 theory of 'low-status cultural exclusiveness', Bryson seeks to determine whether those of low social standing do, in fact, demonstrate group-based, singular musical tastes. As she notes:

> Peterson and Simkus…show that high status individuals have a wider, "omnivorous" range of musical taste and consumption than lower status "univores" who are *believed* to adhere to more specific sub-cultural spheres defined by race, age and region.
>
> I test this second part of the theory using data from the 1993 General Social Survey. Focusing on the exclusive function of taste, I show that musical *dislikes* are used to construct group boundaries based on racial, ethnic, religious and regional identity, especially at low levels of education.[97]

Others, such as Katz-Gerro, use the omnivore-univore theory as a way to move beyond class based distinctions. Bryson takes a different approach, arguing that the variety of tastes by high status individuals becomes a new form of distinction, in itself, rather than what can be seen as the end of status distinctions. In other words, the new marker of distinction and separation between groups is the degree of variety of involvement in activities, or omnivore versus univore. I agree with Bryson, in that it is desirous to have eclectic tastes, and perhaps the more one has the more cultural capital they are afforded; but once again, this paradigm can be problematic, creating value judgments regarding social standing and activity involvement.

Previous studies conducted by Bryson (1996), concluded that those with lower educational levels *do* tend to report disliking more genres, overall, than those who are more educated. Bryson's newest study differs in that it accounts for various identity markers, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and region. Her findings support the hypothesis, made by Peterson and Simkus, that those of lower educational levels are more likely to define their musical tastes around race, ethnicity, religious

[97] Bryson, 'What about the Univores?' 142.

conservatism and geographic region. What must be noted, however, is that group-based musical taste was not found only in lower educated groups: age and gender affect musical taste distinctions at all levels of education.

The surveys I used for the current study did not allow people to indicate if they disliked a genre, only how often they listened to each selection. However, they provided interesting results that will build on the current research of educational levels and musical taste. In order to first determine whether there was any linear correlation between educational levels and how often someone reported listening to a particular genre, a Pearson Correlation Linear Regression test was conducted. To make the results more manageable, and realistic, only genres which reported a total mean frequency of listening of 2.0 or higher were used. Results of this test, which indicate a significance at the 0.01 level, can be seen in Table 27 below

The following results showed a positive correlation above a correlation coefficient of .200, in descending order:

1. Folk (PCC = .304)
2. Contemporary folk (PCC = .266)
3. Classical (PCC = .267)
4. Traditional folk (PCC = .263)
5. Traditional jazz (PCC = .257)
6. Contemporary jazz (PCC = .243)
7. Motown (PCC = .242)
8. Jazz (PCC = .243)
9. Indie folk (PCC = .226)
10. Orchestral (PCC = .218)
11. Classic blues (PCC = .212)
12. World (PCC = .213)

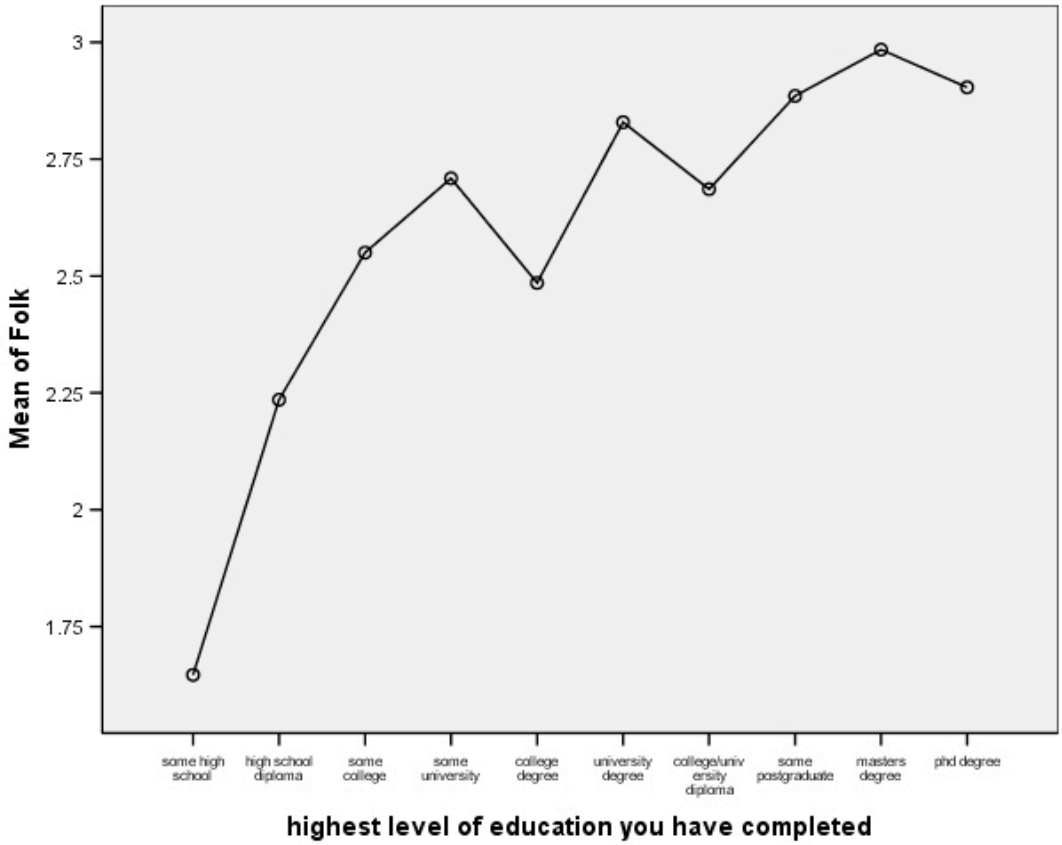
On the other hand, significantly fewer genres reported a statistically significant negative correlation. Only one genre, heavy metal, reported a Pearson correlation coefficient of over .200 (heavy metal PCC = -.203).

Table 27: Pearson Correlation Coefficient: Educational Levels / Musical Genres

		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Positive Correlation	Folk	.304(**)	4.03E-25	1110
	Contemporary folk	.266(**)	1.28E-19	1122
	Classical	.267(**)	1.61E-19	1111
	Traditional folk	.263(**)	4.03E-19	1121
	Traditional jazz	.257(**)	2.29E-18	1125
	Contemporary jazz	.243(**)	1.48E-16	1125
	Motown	.242(**)	2.43E-16	1121
	Jazz	.243(**)	2.51E-16	1110
	Indie folk	.226(**)	2.02E-14	1121
	Orchestral	.218(**)	1.45E-13	1122
	Classic blues	.212(**)	7.24E-13	1123
	World	.213(**)	1.15E-12	1096
	Soul	.190(**)	1.38E-10	1121
	Blues	.186(**)	4.63E-10	1110
	Brit pop	.180(**)	1.27E-09	1120
	Indie rock	.141(**)	2.00E-06	1121
	Ambient	.122(**)	4.02E-05	1120
	Euro pop	.114(**)	0.000142	1119
	Blues rock	.100(**)	0.000784	1121
	Funk	.100(**)	0.000841	1122
	Pop	.098(**)	0.001143	1107
	Singer/songwriter	.090(**)	0.002451	1120
	R&B/soul	.087(**)	0.003838	1105
	Reggae	.079(**)	0.008877	1107
	Country rock	.078(**)	0.009057	1123
	Country	.070(*)	0.019670	1110
	Brit rock	.069(*)	0.020562	1119
	Classic rock	.059(*)	0.047025	1123
Negative Correlation	Heavy metal	-.203(**)	6.90E-12	1123
	Techno	-.182(**)	7.26E-10	1124
	Progressive rock	-.125(**)	2.73E-05	1120
	Punk rock	-.125(**)	6.11E-05	1030
	Dance	-.113(**)	0.000159	1109
	Punk	-.094(**)	0.002506	1030
	Rock	-.070(*)	0.019974	1104

By far, the genre with the strongest correlation to educational level was folk (PCC = .304). A means plot clearly shows a rise in mean frequency of listening as educational levels rise:

Figure 7: Means Plot: Educational Level / Folk



It seems quite strange that folk, and two of folk's subgenres, would have the highest statistical correlation to education levels. Folk music, while diverse, is not a genre which has traditionally been associated with the upper classes. One would expect genres such as classical and opera, to show a high correlation between education level and taste, but even within the subgenres of art music, orchestral was the only genre to have a correlation rating of more than .200 (PCC = .218). Ruth Finnegan, in her ethnographic research of music scenes in Milton Keynes, also found that folk musicians tended to be higher educated, urban-dwellers, as opposed to the stereotyped rural, uneducated folk musician.[98]

[98] Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

However, even though there may not be a linear correlation between education levels and genres, for a quite a number of genres there are significant differences between groups. An ANOVA test reveals these relationships between education level and genre of music. At a significance level of >0.02, 66 of the 86 genres reported differences between the groups. In order to make the results more manageable, only those with a significance rating of >1.0E-10 (an extremely high significance level) are shown in Table 28:

Table 28: ANOVA Results: Education Levels / Genres

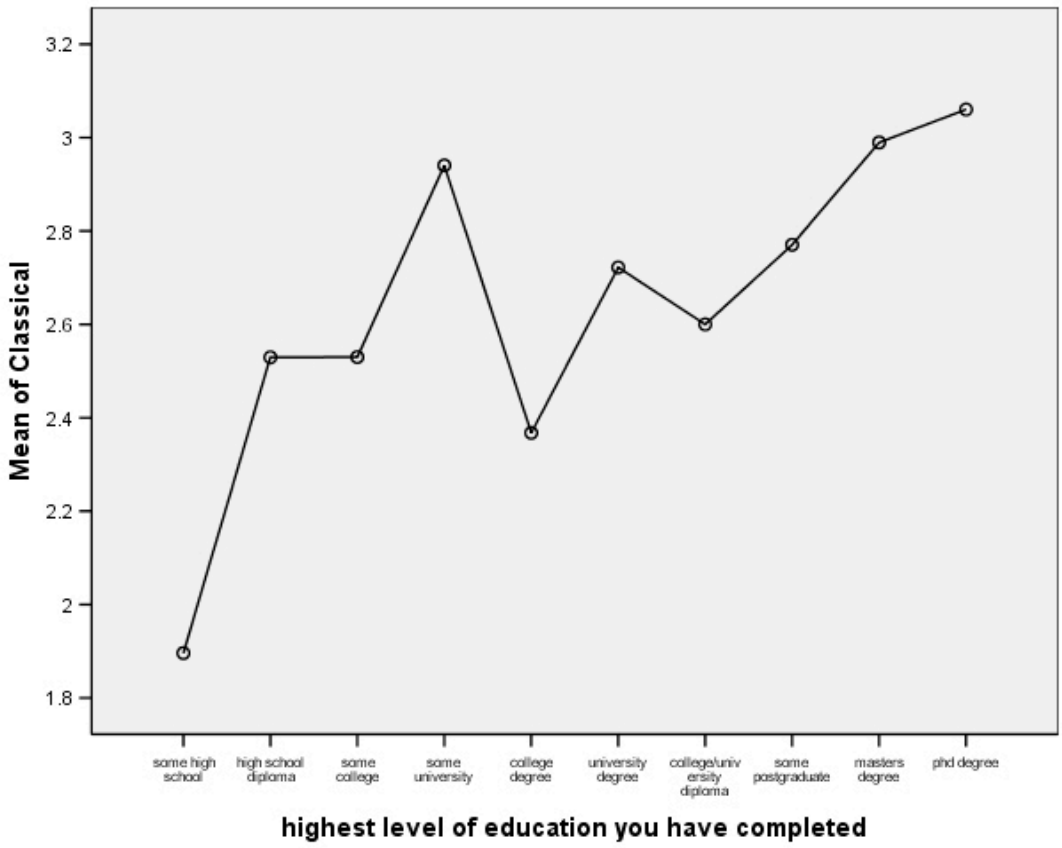
Genre	Sig.
Folk	9.41E-27
Classical	5.01E-22
Contemporary folk	3.55E-21
Death metal	2.91E-19
Traditional jazz	4.38E-19
Traditional folk	1.92E-18
Motown	9.49E-16
Orchestral	1.61E-15
Baroque	1.79E-15
Classic blues	9.69E-15
Indie folk	4.27E-14
Bluegrass	4.52E-14
Jazz	7.77E-14
Contemporary jazz	9.34E-14
World	5.51E-12
Ambient	5.4E-11
Minimalism	7.45E-11

The genre of folk, once again, reports statistically significant differences between groups; indicating it has the strongest linear relationship. The results show that those with 'some high school' or a 'high school diploma' report listening to folk music with a mean frequency of 1.65 and 2.24, respectively, yet those who have masters or PhD report mean frequencies of 2.98 and 2.90. I suspect this may be related to age, rather than education, and expect that 'folk' will show significant differences between age groups.

Although there was no linear correlation between 'classical' and education, it did, however, report the second highest significance rating in the ANOVA test (Sig. = 5.01E-22). A means plot shows a marked divergence in the linear correlation

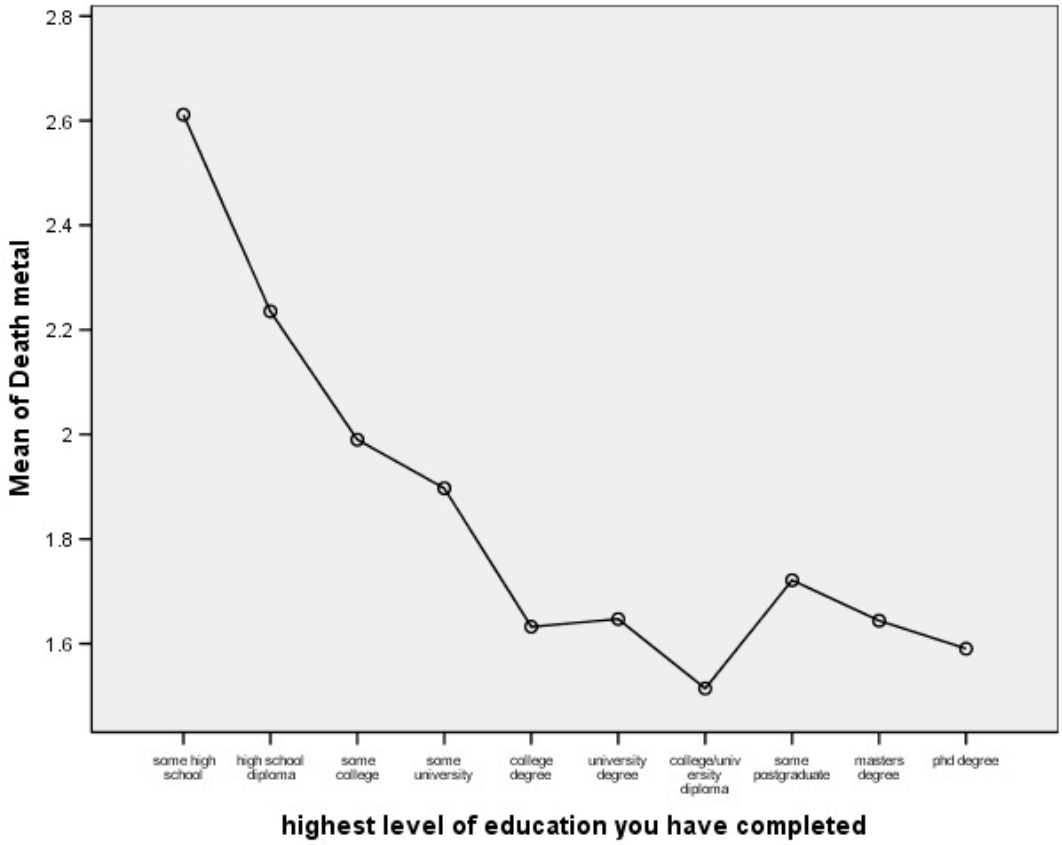
between college and university involvement, but with the largest differences between those with 'some high school' (m = 1.89) and 'masters degree' (m = 2.99) and 'PhD degree' (m= 3.06). Of interest to this study, is that since the data suggests no linear correlation, it is difficult to infer that classical music is a genre associated with high educational level and social standing. While those with graduate degrees report high mean frequencies of listening, the discrepancies between high school education to graduate school are too apparent to conclude any causality. The question also has to be raised that, this study was conducted by a musicology student, with close ties to university music students, so the results could be skewed.

Figure 8: Means Plot: Educational Levels / Classical Music



Death metal is an interesting example of a negative correlation. A means plot clearly shows that, the higher the education, the less likely they are the listen to death metal. Death metal suggests a stronger relationship to educational level than classical music, but in reverse correlations.

Figure 9: Means Plot: Educational Levels / Death Metal

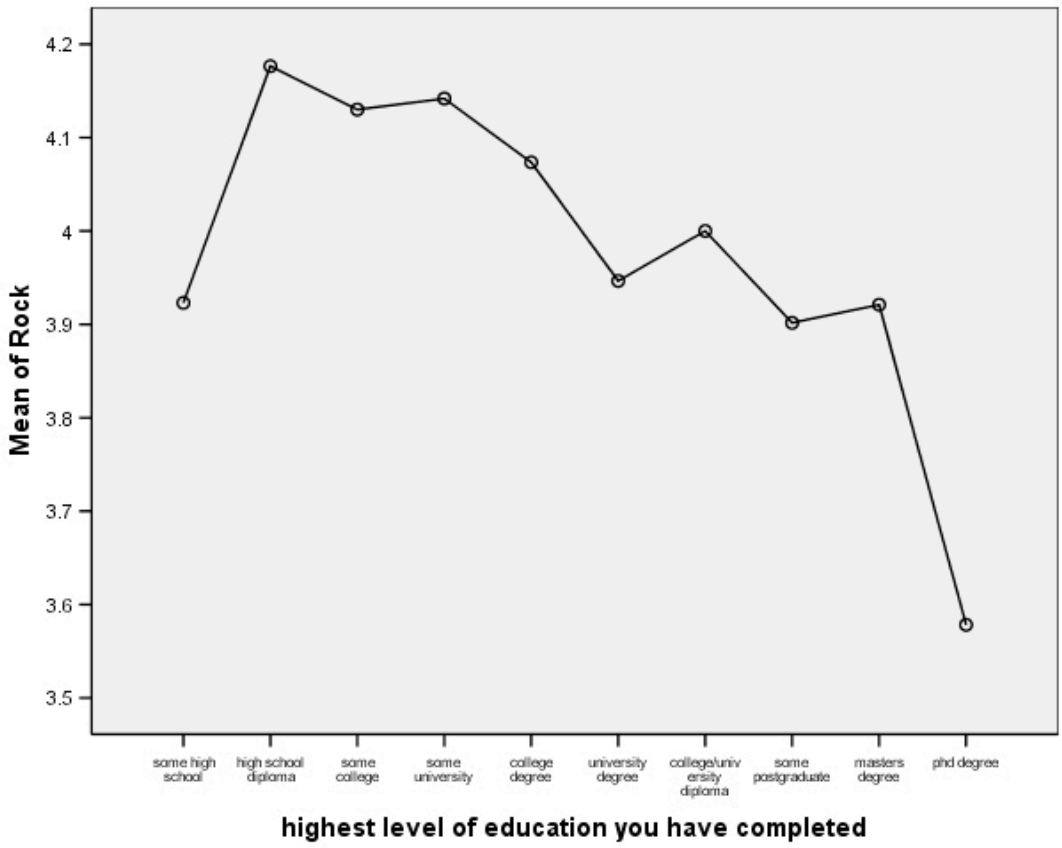


Except for folk and classical, the genres showing the most significant results in an ANOVA test are all subgenres of what could be considered mainstream styles, such as rock, pop, and hip hop. The results give a glimpse into how people, of all educational levels, choose to define their genre tastes, rather than what genres they actually listen to. While I find that age is a better indicator than education, what these results point to is fluidity in how genres are defined. The results also show that those with higher education listen to more diverse genres than the less educated, which builds on the omnivore-univore theory.

The omnivore-univore theory purports that as people gain more education and move up the social ladder, their tastes become broader, or more omnivorous. What my results indicate, is that those of higher educational level are more likely to

define their tastes as more diverse, or omnivorous, through the inclusion of a large number of subgenres. They are less likely to identify with broad terms, such as rock or pop, but use more specific terms, such as traditional jazz, indie folk, bluegrass, motown and classic blues. Those with lesser education tend to define their styles based on mainstream, broad terms, such as 'rock music', which can arguably be considered the broadest genre definition available, bar classical music, and presents the highest mean frequency of listening across the entire genre list (m = 3.97). With educational levels, there is a clear, negative correlation to rock, yet a positive one to a variety of rock subgenres, including: indie rock and brit rock.

Figure 10: Means Plot: Educational Levels / Rock Music



(2) Marital Status

While it is highly unlikely that marital status determines musical preference, it is interesting to note the potential impact that relationships may have. Taste, in all aspects of life, is often influenced by the relationships we have. We are naturally

drawn to those with similar tastes, but through these relationships we are also exposed to new experiences and situations that shape taste formation. As consumers, we are more likely to try something new if it is suggested by someone we trust.

In the musical activities section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate how often their musical tastes were influenced by friends, family, or significant others as well as by non-relationship influences, such as radio, television, and print sources. Table 29 shows the overall mean frequencies, without accounting for any identity indicators, in descending order:

Table 29: Mean Frequencies: Factors Influencing Musical Tastes

Activity	N	Mean
Are you influenced by friends' musical tastes	1241	3.111201
Find new music from the radio	1240	2.880645
Find new music on internet sites like MySpace or LastFM	1237	2.763137
Find new music from boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other	1240	2.718548
Find new music from magazines/newspapers	1240	2.404032
Find new music from TV (non music stations)	1240	2.181452
Find new music from TV (music stations)	1240	2.11371

Being influenced by friends had, by far, the highest mean frequency, (m = 3.11). It then seems strange that being influenced by a significant other/boyfriend/girlfriend, rates significantly lower (m = 2.71), but, nevertheless, still very high. This raises the question of whether similar tastes are a draw for developing a relationship or connection, or if relationships, friends or life partners, directly influence taste.

When accounting for gender, there is no significant difference between whether males or females are more likely to be influenced by their friends. There are, however, quite significant differences between genders when it comes to being influenced by a romantic partner (ANOVA Sig. = 1.16E-08), music TV stations (Sig. = 1.11E-08), radio (Sig. = 2.55E-05), and TV (Sig. = 2.87E-05). In each case, the data favours females, suggesting they are more open to being influenced by their partner when it comes to music.

Taking age into account, a linear correlation test suggests that, except for 'finding new music from print sources', there is a negative correlation to being influenced by outside factors. The strongest correlations found were between age and finding new music from TV, both non-music (PCC = -.236) and music stations (PCC = -.284). This supports a group of findings, presented in Chapter 1.3, where a number of respondents noted that their musical tastes were fairly established by their mid-twenties, and they were less likely to be influenced by outside factors, such as friends or family, after that age. It seems that youth are keen to explore new tastes, relationships and identities, but as we age, we become more set in our ways, as we have a solid understanding of who we are, what we like, and our place in life. This is not to say that people listen to the same style of music after reaching 30, but they are probably more likely to experiment with different artists within a genre, as opposed to entirely new genre distinctions.

What will be interesting to observe, as digitality progresses, is how this impacts digital youth as they mature. As a generation, digital youth are accustomed to not defining their tastes by mainstream, industry-imposed standards. They also use the internet to freely discover new artists and genres of music. It will be of interest to see if their preferences change as they age, which is what has happened historically, or if this fluid process of exploration will continue into old age. As well, will the influence of personal relationships continue to be a key player?

(3) Age

Historically, genre preference has been associated with age. Typically, during the past few decades, popular styles, such as rock and top-40 pop, have signalled youth and ephemerality, whereas highbrow styles, such as jazz and various classical forms, rest in the domain of older generations.

Although some of his opinions on popular music and youth can be considered suspect, Allan Bloom's important work, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) clearly associates youth culture with popular music, to the point of addiction, particularly with rock. For Bloom, rock music, with its barbaric and sexual undertones, undermines the ability of youth to appreciate and understand classical music. Bloom notes that:

> The issue here is education…[rock music] ruins the imagination of young people and makes it very difficult for them to have a passionate relationship to the art and thought that are the substance of liberal education.[99]

The problem stems from the fact that, 'no classical music has been produced that can speak to this generation'[100]. Bloom claims that students are addicted to rock music at an irrational, basic level, and that it is not something which excites them intellectually, as classical music does for the aged. As such, it affects their ability to learn and appreciate intellectual affairs.

Just as rock music is considered ephemeral, Bloom feels that the relationship youth have with music is also ephemeral and is something they will outgrow, as they become functioning members of society. Youth is a time for experimentation and exploration before social inclusion. I would argue that all music allows for exploration of self, internally and place in society, and I find it difficult to accept that rock music creates moral unrest and undermines a youth's ability to learn in academic settings. Knowledge of rock music may not be relevant to Bloom, but it is a style that has musical merit. Music, no matter the genre, can be enjoyed throughout a person's life, incorporating elements into their daily lives, and increasing sociability and the desire to connect with others. In direct opposition, Bloom notes that:

> The students will get over this music, or at least the exclusive passion for it. But they will do so in the same way Freud says that men accept the reality principle – as something harsh, grim and essentially unattractive, a mere necessity. These students will assiduously study economics or the professions and the Michael Jackson costume will slip off to reveal a Brooks Brothers suit beneath. They will want to get ahead and live comfortably. But his life is as empty and false as the one they left behind. The choice is not between quick fixes and dull calculation. This is what liberal education is meant to show them. But as long as they have the Walkman on, they cannot hear what the great tradition has to say. And, after its prolonged use, when they take it off, they find they are deaf.[101]

Pre-dating Bloom, Adorno's critique of popular music is well known and also subject to much criticism. Adorno argues that popular music perpetuates and reinforces a culture of inattention and distraction. For him, popular music requires

[99] Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 79.
[100] Ibid., 70.
[101] Ibid., 81.

no intellectual thought, thereby creating a culture of laziness, dependence on capitalism, and need for the next quick fix, or, in other words, the next popular song. Again, popular music is associated with the ephemeral and less intellectually stimulating. As with Bloom, Adorno also associates this type of music with youth. In his words:

> Individuals of the rhythmically obedient type are mainly found among the youth — the so-called radio generation. They are most susceptible to a process of masochistic adjustment to authoritarian collectivism. The type is not restricted to any one political attitude. The adjustment to anthropophagous collectivism is found as often among left-wing political groups as among right-wing groups. Indeed, both overlap: repression and crowd mindedness overtake the followers of both trends. The psychologies tend to meet despite the surface distinctions in political attitudes.[102]

Building on the Frankfurt School of Sociology, Andy Bennett has taken a more ethnographic approach to the study of popular music and youth. In his book, *Popular Music and Youth Culture*, he acknowledges that popular music is the domain of youth, but does so without placing value judgments on these consumers. In his critique of Adorno's work, Bennett argues that:

> By concentrating on the alleged regulating and standardising effects of popular music, Adorno closes off any possibility of social actors themselves playing a part in determining the meaning and significance of popular music genres and texts.[103]

For Bennett, it is not so much *what* form of music youth are listening to, but the social and emotional benefits that arise from listening to music. He believes the meaning of music must be examined, in order to determine tastes and how these affect the individual. How one consumes music, therefore, becomes more important than *what* one consumes. In Bennett's words:

> Consumers take the structures of meaning – the musical and extra-musical resources associated with particular genres of pop – and combine them with meanings of their own to produce distinctive patterns of consumption and stylistic expression.[104]

[102] Theodore Adorno, 'On Popular Music,' *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* (New York: Institute of Social Research, 1941): XI, 17-48.
[103] A. Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture*, 36.
[104] Ibid., 46.

While a subjective approach to music and meaning is not something unique to youth, it is possibly more important to their relationship with popular music, as it seems to occupy their lives in a much different way than adults. Bennett finds that for the majority of youth, music is an 'omnipresent activity of their day to day existence', and it a 'primary, if not *the* primary, leisure resource for young people'[105].

For youth, exploring their musical tastes is part of the process of identity formation. In this sense, it is much more important for them, than for adults who have generally 'found' themselves. Music aids youth in the maintenance of emotions, coping in difficult situations, creating self images and situating themselves within social groups[106].

While these sociological and philosophical examinations of youth and music tend to make the blanket assumption that popular music is for youth, we need to delve into psychological methods to determine *what*, exactly, youth are listening to. Each genre within popular music posits different social and cultural connotations, so how youth identity with them is important to their individual identity formation. While psychology is notorious for over-generalising about groups of people, in this situation it is helpful in providing specific genre indications. The following articles give a sense of *what* youths are listening to, while the sociological approaches provide the *why*.

Albert LeBlanc's work has been fundamental to the ethnographic examination of music taste and age. His work primarily focuses on how tastes change with age, and how the maturation process alters how susceptible one is to various outside factors. In his own words:

> The maturation variable is difficult to separate from the influence of the cultural environment variables, musical training, auditory sensitivity, socioeconomic status, and memory. At different maturational stages, a listener will be more amenable to the influence of certain aspects of the cultural environment. Young children are drawn toward the influence of the peer group and adolescent-oriented segments of the media. Musical training will naturally increase in proportion to a listener's age. Auditory sensitivity to high-frequency sounds will decrease with advancing age, while socioeconomic status will typically rise. Young people will have less information from the cultural environment to store in their memory, while middle-aged listeners will

[105] Ibid., 34.
[106] Tarrant, North and Hargreaves, 'English and American Adolescents' Reasons for Listening to Music,' 135.

> have more. Although elderly listeners will have experienced a wealth of input information during their lifetimes, increasing age will characteristically weaken their memory.[107]

I quite agree with LeBlanc's argument for the consideration of age as a marker in determining taste. While it cannot be considered the sole indicator, it is an important component. Age affects people in many ways but, while the core of who a person is tends to remain fairly stable, tastes can change throughout life.

LeBlanc et al. conducted a follow-up ethnographic study in 1996, as discussed in Chapter 1.1. In opposition to the omnivore-univore theory, LeBlanc hypothesises that, as people age, their tastes become increasingly narrow. Younger listeners, who are susceptible to outside influences, are also more open to exploring new sounds and tastes. This results in a U-shaped curve of preference: tastes begin quite narrow, expand as one ages up to a certain point, and then becomes narrower through old age. In order to test this theory, LeBlanc et al. exposed subjects to 18 samples of music within the genres of art music, traditional jazz, and rock. Ranging from ages 9 to 91, respondents were asked to rate their comments, from like to dislike, on a Likert-type scale. Their results, for the most part, supported the U-shaped curve of preference. As the authors discuss:

> There was a general tendency for preferences to assume a gentle U-shaped curve corresponding to grade level, with higher preferences in the lowest grades and again at college level. There was a decline in the curve on the right side of the U, indicating the lower preference averages of the adults who were not college students, many of whom were elderly. The low point for preferences was in the middle school or junior high years, Grades 6, 7, and 8. Adults who were not full-time college students…had preferences distinctly lower than college students...but their preferences were still higher than Grade 12.[108]

They found that preferences for the three styles were fairly similar for each education level, with more difference between age groups, than style preferences.

Where this study falls short is that it only examined three broad genres, with the authors choosing the songs to represent them. This raises questions concerning genre definition, and what songs should, or should not be included in those genres. It could be that listeners may have liked a specific song, but it cannot be extrapolated

[107] Alberta LeBlanc, 'An interactive theory of music preference,' *Journal of Music Therapy* 19 (!982): 37-38.
[108] LeBlanc, Sims, Siivola and Obert, 'Music Style Preferences of Different Age Listeners,' 55-56.

that they like the majority of songs in that genre. Aligning oneself with a particular genre is difficult; it is often easier to align taste with a specific song and/or artist.

Expanding on this narrow view of genre definitions, Rentfor and Gosling conducted a study in 2007, examining the validity of age-based genre preference stereotypes, using 14 genres. This study is important in that it looked at *what* youth are listening to: which genres and why. It successfully employed sociological indicators, such as personality type and genre preference, in order to examine stereotypes and their validity. Ethnographic data was acquired on college-aged students to determine their beliefs on the following stereotypes: personality and music genres; the value of fans and specific music genres; and fan personality and specific music genres. They then conducted a second test, assessing the students' personality type and musical preferences, in order to determine how accurate the stereotypes were.

In the first test, they found that fans of classical and religious music were perceived to be high in agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability, while rock fans were perceived to be high in extraversion, moderate in agreeableness, low in conscientiousness and emotional stability, and high in openness. Also, 'whereas classical music fans are seen as politically conservative, intelligent, physically unattractive, un-athletic and artistic, rock music fans are seen as politically liberal and not religious. Religious music fans are regarded as politically conservative and, of course, religious, while rap fans are seen as politically liberal and athletic'[109]. When correlating these predictions with students' actual musical tastes and personalities, it was found that, while the stereotypes for religious, country, classical and jazz music were fairly accurate, those associated with pop, rap and soul were not.

I find these results interesting in that it is a further indication of the diversity of genre distinctions within the main, broad categories, such as rock and pop. While it is easy to conjure up the stereotypical identity of a religious music fan, it is more difficult to predict what a pop music fan would be like, as there is such incredible diversity within the genre. In rock music, for example, someone who enjoys emo music would be perceived differently from someone who listens to heavy metal, goth

[109] Peter K. Rentfrow and Samuel D. Gosling, 'The Context and Validity of Music-Genres Stereotypes Among College Students,' *Psychology of Music* 35.2 (2007): 316.

rock, prog rock, or country-rock. Each of these subgenres, within rock, has its own stereotypical associations, and few commonalities between fans of those styles.

The 86 genres listed in the present survey was an attempt to address the subjective nature of genre definitions, as it allowed respondents to describe a more thorough, detailed map of their musical preferences. As with previous studies, age was definitely a strong factor in guiding musical taste. I would just like to note, however, that I do not think that age, itself, is a taste determinant, but more that taste is a by-product of age. They form a symbiotic relationship, in which they evolve together, but underlying personality tends to remain static throughout most of one's life. The music encountered during a person's formative years often stays with them throughout their life span. They will always have a connection to that music, whether or not they actively listen to it.

Age and Musical Taste Results

As with the other tests, genres with a mean frequency score of less than 2.0 were removed before conducting a linear regression Pearson Correlation test. The test revealed that 32 of the remaining 52 genres had significant ratings at the 0.01 level. The Pearson Correlations, however, were not particularly strong for the majority of the results. The data did not uphold a notable stereotype, that youth are associated with pop music, as a broadly defined genre. There was no statistical correlation between pop music, in its broadest sense, and age. In fact, the Pearson Correlation was almost zero (PCC = -.007), indicating absolutely no correlation between age and listening to pop music. Top-40 pop did solicit a preference towards youth, at a statistical significance at the 0.05 level, but with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -.060, it is not a particularly strong indication that as people get older, they listen to less Top-40.

The strongest linear relationships between age and genre, and the only three with correlation coefficients above .250, were found in 'motown' (PCC = .283), 'classic blues' (PCC = .273), and 'traditional folk' (PCC = .250). These all had positive a correlation, indicating that as people age, they are more likely to listen to these genres. In general, of the 32 statistically significant results, most were positive correlations, but few demonstrated a linear correlation where youth were more likely

to listen to a genre. The highest negative correlations were found in 'heavy metal' (PCC = -.202), hip hop/rap (PCC = -.196) and 'techno' (PCC = -.178).

While it is problematic to allege causality from these results, it does predict two entirely different scenarios, which will be explored: (1) that the older a respondent is, the more discerning their tastes become and (2) that age and taste do not follow linear progressions. I would argue that neither of these scenarios is necessarily right or wrong, but both have relevance to digitality.

An ANOVA test was also conducted, to determine if there were any statistical differences in musical taste between digital youth and digital immigrants. This test was not concerned with discerning if people listen to different genres as they age, but whether there were differences between entire age groups. I hypothesized that digital culture is affecting the way in which people find and listen to music and, as such, there should be differences in listening habits between those who have grown up entirely immersed in digital culture (digital natives), and those who are catching up to the technology (digital immigrants). Unfortunately, what this test cannot determine is if technology is making taste more eclectic in youth, and changing how they define genres.

The ANOVA test results, as seen in Table 30, show that, as with the Pearson Correlation test, a higher number of genres are statistically more likely to be listened to by digital immigrants, as opposed to digital natives.

Table 30: ANOVA Results: Generation / Musical Genres (Sig = >0.01)

Genre	Significance	Generation
Motown	6.78E-16	older
Death metal	1.17E-14	younger
Old country	2.22E-12	older
Soul	7.40E-12	older
Classic blues	1.82E-11	older
Bluegrass	7.43E-10	older
Traditional folk	1.39E-09	older
Boy bands	3.97E-08	younger
Dub	1.06E-07	older
Emo	2.50E-07	younger
Gangsta rap	2.61E-07	younger
Christian rock	4.52E-07	younger
Country rock	5.28E-07	older
Hip hop	5.45E-07	younger
Traditional jazz	7.58E-07	older
Hip hop/rap	1.15E-06	younger
Funk	1.17E-06	older
Rap rock	1.31E-06	younger
Early music	2.88E-06	older
Non-musicals film soundtracks	4.59E-06	younger
Blues	5.16E-06	older
Roots reggae	6.17E-06	older
Soundtracks	1.05E-05	younger
Hair metal	1.30E-05	younger
Jazz	2.07E-05	older
Folk	2.11E-05	older
Musicals soundtracks	2.16E-05	younger
Contemporary folk	2.34E-05	older
Heavy metal	2.87E-05	younger
Baroque	3.08E-05	older
TV soundtracks	3.70E-05	younger
Renaissance	5.93E-05	older
Contemporary blues	8.33E-05	older
Swing	0.000145	older
Punk rock	0.000188	younger
Dancehall	0.000198	older
World	0.000198	older
Reggae	0.000214	older
New soul	0.000222	older
Ambient	0.000244	older
Rap	0.000272	younger
Minimalism	0.00034	older
Christian pop	0.000365	younger
Contemporary jazz	0.000864	older
Country	0.001121	older
Contemporary country	0.003343	older
Rock	0.003695	younger
Techno	0.00389	younger

Similar to the linear correlation test, there was no association with pop music and youth. It seems that pop is a popular genre choice across the survey, and has no specific ties to youth. Subgenres of pop music, most notably boy bands, did report statistically more listening amongst youth (Sig. = 3.9E-08). The major finding from Table 30 is that youth tend to be associated with more aggressive styles of music, both musically and socially. Often considered lyrically aggressive, and associated with violence and gang culture, gangsta rap, hip hop and rap all had significantly higher, mean frequencies amongst youth. Musically aggressive styles, such as death metal, hair metal, heavy metal, punk, rap rock, emo and punk rock also report higher means, as opposed to the more subdued genres of the older respondents, including: baroque, minimalism, lounge, swing, ambient, folk, soul, renaissance, classical, jazz, contemporary jazz and motown.

Interestingly, both digital natives and immigrants reported listening to broad, main genres, as well as subgenres. In other words, one group was not more likely to define their tastes more narrowly than the other. I had predicted that the digital natives, immersed in a culture that does not stress the importance of genres, would choose more subgenres, as they are artist focused, rather than genre focused. The data, however, suggests that both groups identify equally with broad and sub genres.

(4) Gender and Musical Taste

As with age, gender is an identity marker which has received a lot of attention in regards to musical preference stereotypes. Although pop music was shown to have no particular association with youth, it is often seen as a genre associated with teenage girls, an age of exploration before joining the 'real world'[110]. On the other hand, rock music has traditionally been associated with males and masculinity, as its authenticity and realness are easily relatable to men of all ages, but especially those in their teenage formative years[111]. This section will explore some of the stereotypes which have been perpetuated in academia and society, before determining their validity in iPod culture. The ability to probe different tastes, especially online, in a potentially anonymous setting, could have the potential to eliminate a lot of gender stereotypes about taste, and ultimately, one's offline identity. This is not to say that online and offline identities are separate, as they are fragments of the whole, but

[110] Railton, 'The Gendered Carnival of Pop.'
[111] Keightley, 'Reconsidering Rock.'

what people listen to online, and what they demonstrate to the public, could be different. The fluidity of musical taste is akin to that of gender identity, in that people can choose to express themselves in a myriad of ways on the continuum of masculinity and femininity. Music is often used as an aid in this projection of self.

As stated above, the most obvious stereotypes associated with males and females, is the dichotomy between rock and pop. While there is nothing inherently gendered about the genres themselves, it is the way in which they are defined and perceived by the public and academia, which perpetuates the stereotypes[112]. Often, genre definitions do not contain concrete gender associations but, Frith and Cohen, in particular, by correlating music with patterns of appropriate behaviour for males and females, show that the definitions are sociologically gender based. As Cohen notes, 'Rock and pop music are closely associated with gender – with patterns and conventions of male and female behaviour and with ideas about how men and women should or should not behave'[113].

Pop music, unlike rock, is associated more with *young* females, than with adult women in that it provides models for young girls to explore their sense of self, as well as question traditionally feminine roles, such as wife and mother. Diane Railton comments on this when she states:

> Pop music provides a brief taste of freedom for young women – a time when they are placed at center stage, when the world is turned upside down. It is a time when they can let themselves go, enjoy the bodily pleasures of music and experience the *jouissance* of pop. It is the commercial nature of pop music that means that those who produce the music must take young women's pleasures seriously, and must give them what they want. As the target audience, for both the music itself and the magazines that support it, young women's needs and desires are of prime importance. This is something, however, that does not last: they must put it behind them as they grow up.[114]

This exploration of what it means to be a young woman is akin to the carnivalesque nature of pop music.

Railton notes that the carnival is a place where traditional order is overturned for legitimate illegitimacy, where sex and the body are central, and status is

[112] Roy Shuker, 'Beyond the "High Fidelity" Stereotype: Defining the (Contemporary) Record Collector,' *Popular Music* 23.3 (2004); Simon Reynolds and Joy Press, eds., *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock 'n' Roll* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1995).
[113] Cohen, 'Popular Music, Gender, and Sexuality,' 226.
[114] Railton, 'The Gendered Carnival of Pop,' 330.

undermined[115]. Pop music ties into this definition because, like the carnival, it is linked to the body, whether sexualized or not, because the performing bodies are exposed and not hidden behind instruments. The main role of pop is to entertain, most often with a female form, but like the carnival, there is a return to conventional life after the show. Railton argues that 'it is not only the music that must be left behind, but the physical and the sexual in the music. The feminine in music must be abandoned as women grow up. It is only permissible for girls and young women'[116].

In the interviews I conducted with high school students, one of the questions that came up quite frequently was whether or not they felt that boys and girls listened to different types of music. Tying into notions of gender stereotypes, their responses demonstrated how they felt boys and girls defined their tastes, and if they felt that there were, in fact, gender differences. The responses were quite mixed, but a few trends stood out. In general, the majority of students felt that there was a difference in what genres girls and boys listen to, but they also felt it was difficult to discern what, exactly, the difference was. When asked, answers included:

> **Female/16/Edinburgh, UK:** Sometimes, some people…like some laddies listen to the same type of music, and stuff.

> **Female/11/Edinburgh, UK:** I think they kinda do listen to the different things – because there's some things boys will listen to and some things that girls will listen to, but I can't really say what they are.

> **Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada:** Yeah, definitely on that one!

When the students did mention specifics, it was rarely about genres. They were more likely to mention different artists that guys or girls might listen to, song tempos, a song's feeling, or even its content. Genres were only mentioned in a few cases. When they were, the traditional stereotype that guys listen to more rock was often brought up:

> **Female/12/Edinburgh, UK:** I always found that boys listen to rock, and girls listen to, just, like, girl groups

> **Female/12/Edinburgh, UK:** I find that boys listen to more, like, rock or R&B and stuff like that, and most boys, they hate ABBA, but you find a lot of girls really like it.

[115] Ibid., 328.
[116] Ibid., 330.

Female/13/Edinburgh, UK: Most of the boys listen to, like, rock music and that.

As well as rap:

Female/14/Edinburgh, UK: I think a lot of guys just listen to rap…I like Akon, but not other rappers.

Female/16/Edinburgh, UK: Boys listen to gangsta stuff.

Counter to the traditional stereotype that young girls listen to pop music, it was never specifically mentioned as a genre that girls listen to. When genres were mentioned, it was only R&B, punk rock, or girl groups:

Female/17/Edinburgh, UK: Well, girls listen to more, like, R&B stuff. Like, guys don't really listen to Shane Ward or anything.

Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: You know, girls listen to girl groups, but I still enjoy guy bands and all that.

Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada: I think the girls listen to more, like, punk rock bands and stuff like that. Like Avril Lavigne, and stuff like that.

It was more likely that specific artists would be mentioned, when talking about what girls like to listen to. Girls Aloud was most often cited in the UK, while Avril Lavigne was a common choice in Canada:

Male/12/Edinburgh, UK: It's not really for me to say what music girls listen to, but I'd say Girls Aloud, Sugababes, stuff like that.

Male/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: Girls listen to Nelly Furtado and Avril Lavigne. And I don't think guys do.

Male/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: Well, I definitely don't listen to Avril Lavigne, or Nelly Furtado or Britney Spears.

When mentioning specific artists for male fans, it was only in reference to what guys *don't* listen to. Specific examples were never given for what these students thought guys listen to:

Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: The guys don't really listen to Avril

Female/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada: I don't think you'd see a guy walking around listening to Britney Spears, Shakira, or Mariah Carey.

Female/16/Edinburgh, UK: Boys don't listen to Leona Lewis' album.

Female/12/Edinburgh, UK: You wouldn't really find, well, boys go to stuff like Westlife or Boyzone or whatever, but my mom would go there, or something like that.

Interestingly, the most common way of distinguishing between perceived differences in guys' and girls' listening habits was by song content, be it lyrics, melody, or tempo. This could signal a move away from the importance of genre definitions, for digital natives. Fast is not a genre, but a tempo, so it is interesting to note that is how many of the students were describing musical styles. For them, song classification is less important than how the individual reacts to, and engages with the song. A few respondents were keen to note that it is not the genres that guys and girls listen to that are different, but the way in which they engage with the songs. They felt that guys were more likely to pay attention to, and enjoy the melody and working mechanics, while girls were more likely to listen to the lyrics and identify with the stories being told by the artists. While not explicitly cited by the students, their views are reminiscent of stereotypical notions of rock music and guitars as masculine, as well as pop music drawing on emotions, in order to create engagement. In their words:

Interviewer: Do you think that guys and girls might listen to different music?

3 (Male/17/Edinburgh, UK): I dunno..
2 (Female/17/Edinburgh, UK): I think it maybe affects guys and girls in different ways.
3: Uh huh...like, maybe we listen to it, I dunno...

Interviewer: What do you mean?

2: Like, if a guy hears a song, they might just like the...well, they might just like the tune, or like the melody of whatever, but I think if a girl, well, I know if I listen, I like picture to words there
3: yeah
2: I dunno, it affects people different
1 (Female/17/Edinburgh, UK): guys...whereas girls care about lyrics...as long as lyrics are of a certain topic
3: maybe you can relate to it
1: like if you're broken up then you can find a track that's a bit more slower or sadder so you can feel like that - but guys, if there's a nice melody you listen to it regardless of whether the lyrics..

Interviewer: So it's just the lyrics, not the music itself that guys and girls might differ on?

3: yeah, I think so
1: what you get from the music
3: you really need to ask a guy that listens to different music, I dunno...
1: I listen to, like, mainly, for what a song's kinda saying. if the song's got a really to it, I'll listen 'cause, like, let's say it's about an issue that I, like, that's close to my heart, so, the song's related to said issues, then I'll listen to that song, and I'll want to, like, listen to the lyrics as well as the music, but, there's also, it can't just be someone smashing a guitar, like quoting Shakespeare or something, it has to at least have a tuneful
2: I don't think there's a lot of guys like him, though...well, maybe the only one I know in here

Also, in response to content, many students felt that guys listen to faster, harder, louder music, while girls engage with slow, sad, cheesy songs:

Female/15/Edinburgh, UK: Like, most guys don't really like slow songs and stuff.

Female/15/Edinburgh, UK: At least a lot of lassies listen to sad songs, and a lot of laddies just like fast songs.

Male/16/Edinburgh, UK: Guys listen to stuff that's not soapy and cheesy
Female/16/Edinburgh, UK: (in response to above) Yeah, I suppose girls listen to that.

Male/13/Edinburgh, UK: Sometimes girls like the slow music, and boys will like fast music, sometimes, like DJ stuff and that: boys might listen more to that. Sad songs, or slow songs might be a girl thing.

Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: For the most part, guys probably like louder music more, and harder rock. A lot of girls like softer music, and maybe not so loud.

Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada: Girls like softer stuff.

These responses tie into the possibility that girls listen to music for the lyrics, more so than the melody and song construction. There seems to be an emotional dichotomy, in which girls want a heartfelt connection with the artist and the story being told, while boys desire a connection through raw emotion, and how the music affects them physically. These results are very reminiscent of young children at play; girls having tea parties with dolls, hugging and telling stories, and boys being very physical with their toys, which tend to be mechanical. This plays into the

mind/body split, in that the heart represents the body and emotions, or females, whose bodies also tend to be soft, while the mind controls physical functioning, or males, whose bodies are hard and muscular, like rock music. This is not to say that these categories are mutually exclusive, but it does provide new insight on the pop/rock dichotomy, which continues to be debated.

Interestingly, there was a significant group of students who felt that personality had a greater impact on genre choice than gender. They were split, however, in regards to whether particular genres and artists could be considered, 'for girls' or 'for boys.' While some respondents believed that all music was gender neutral, and personality predicted taste, others felt that some styles have gender associations, so personality became a determining factor in song choice, as can be seen in the following responses:

> **Male/15/Edinburgh, UK:** I think it's more based on the person. Like, if you've got a different personality you'll like a different type of music. Like, well, my liking rock, and my mate who's into 80s stuff, it's more because he's very very different from me.
>
> **Male/16/Edinburgh, UK:** Depends what they're like
>
> **Male/16/Edinburgh, UK:** Depends on their personality.
>
> **Male/15/Edinburgh, UK:** Well, I know girls and boys that listen to my music, so, it's mixed.
>
> **Female/12/Edinburgh, UK:** Sometimes the same, sometimes different.
>
> **Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada:** Depends on who they hang out with, and what kinda personality they have, and stuff.
>
> **Female/Grade 9/Burns Lake, Canada:** Half my friends are guys and they listen to the same stuff I do.

Finally, a number of respondents felt that musical taste was a very free process, in which people are allowed to listen to whatever they want, regardless of gender associations. They did not understand why someone would choose a song based on gender stereotypes – their message was simple: if you like something, you might as well listen to it:

> **Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada:** I think you can listen to whatever you want.

Female/Grade 9/Burns Lake, Canada: If you like it, you might as well listen to it.

While no conclusive correlations could be made between gender and genre choice from the student interviews, the survey results will be examined in order to determine if there are any quantitative gender differences. This section will explore data from the survey regarding musical taste, first from the digital youth perspective, and then the results, as a whole. Looking at gender differences between digital youth and immigrants, I would hypothesise that the former would present with more differences. It seems fair to assume that, as youth is a time of self exploration and identification, it would follow that gender plays an important part in this.

After conducting an ANOVA test with gender and musical genres, both groups have a significant number of genres with statistically significant differences between mean frequencies. Interestingly, though, digital youth had fewer significant differences than digital immigrants, indicating that the older respondents were more likely to separate their tastes by gender lines. Of the 85 genres, 39 rated significant differences for the digital immigrants, and 28 for digital youth. Also of interest, for digital youth, 19 of those differences favoured the females, with only 9 for the men; for digital immigrants, only 7 genres favoured the females, while it was 32 for the men. From these results, it could be suggested that girls explore many avenues during youth to develop their identity and sense of self, but as they mature and settle into relationships and motherhood, they find that sense within a few genres; boys, during youth, they may explore the more masculine side of self, but as they age and become fathers and partners, may start to explore the more feminine and nurturing side of self, as well as be more open to other ways of being. It could also be seen that, as people age, men become more open and their world expands, while the habitus of women becomes smaller and more defined.

In regards to genres, with a mean frequency of more than 1.5, there were 25 for digital youth. The data suggests that youth espouse traditional gender stereotypes: the girls are more likely to listen to feminine genres, such as girl groups, Top-40 pop, pop, dance, soundtracks of all forms, and singer/songwriters; the boys, on the other hand, tend to listen to traditionally masculine styles, such as prog rock,

heavy metal, post-rock, rap and electronica. The only result which seems out of character, is the tendency for males to listen to 'ambient' music, much more so than females. In descending significance, the following genres report statistically higher mean frequencies for female digital youth:

1. Boy bands
2. Girl groups
3. Top-40 pop
4. Musical Soundtracks
5. Singer/songwriter
6. Pop
7. Soundtracks
8. Non-musicals soundtracks
9. R&B
10. Dance
11. Brit pop
12. Easy Listening
13. TV soundtracks
14. Emo
15. Contemporary Country
16. Euro Pop
17. Opera
18. Disco

While the following are favoured statistically by male digital youth:

1. Progressive rock
2. Heavy metal
3. Ambient
4. Post-rock
5. Rap
6. Electronica
7. Classic blues

In contrast, after eliminating the genres with a total mean frequency of less than 1.5, digital immigrants had 37 statistically significant differences between genders. The following, in descending order, are the genres which females reported listening to statistically more than the males:

1. Musicals soundtracks
2. Boy Bands
3. Meditative
4. Brit rock
5. Top-40 pop

As with digital youth, traditional, feminine genres, such as Boy bands and Top-40 pop are still present, but there are significantly fewer pop genres reported. As previously suggested, this data may support the theory that girls grow out of pop music as they age and join the real world.

Digital immigrant males report quite a variety of genres which they are more likely to listen to. Returning to the mind/body dichotomy, quite a few of the styles suggest an association with the mind, such as progressive rock, jam bands, and jazz,

while others appeal to basic human emotion and movement – punk rock, reggae, funk, rap, gangsta rap and electronica. Of particular interest is the fairly new genre, emo, which has been associated with young girls and boys, many of whom adopt an androgynous outward appearance, to seem gender-neutral. In these results, however, female digital youth were more likely to listen to emo, but so were male digital immigrants. Emo does not seem to be a genre which males grow into, so its placement is quite curious, but it could be related to openness and an expansion of their listening repertoire. The following is a list of genres which reported significantly higher listening frequencies by male digital immigrants:

1. Indie rock
2. Dub
3. Ska
4. Punk
5. 1970s Punk
6. Punk rock
7. Heavy metal
8. Electronica
9. Minimalism
10. Progressive rock
11. Reggae
12. Jam Bands
13. Roots Reggae
14. Country Rock
15. Soul
16. Ambient
17. Industrial
18. Folk
19. Traditional folk
20. Indie Folk
21. Jazz
22. Post-rock
23. Rock
24. Classic blues
25. Contemporary Folk
26. Emo
27. Funk
28. Blues
29. Old Country
30. Rap
31. Gangsta Rap

The point of splitting the group between digital youth and immigrants is to determine if aging affects taste. It is difficult to apply this to gender, which tends to remain constant throughout life, but these findings are interesting, in that females seem to become more defined in their genre associations and males less so. As the demographic for these groups is fairly large, it would be worth splitting them further, especially the digital natives. I feel as though identity markers, as they relate to taste, are constantly changing for teenagers and young adults, which makes it difficult to group these respondents together accurately. High school students, especially, are more likely to change their tastes, than those above 20. Interview responses indicate that tastes settle in the early 20s (see Chapter 1.2). To account for this, another

ANOVA test was conducted for gender and musical taste, this time splitting the groups between those aged 18 and under, and those above.

Not surprisingly, as it further corroborates previous results, only 12 genres exhibited significant listening differences between genders for those under 18, with 11 in favour of girls, and one for boys. This, again, solidifies the argument that, through the teenage years, while searching for their identity, girls tend towards softer, more feminine music, while boys are drawn toward hard styles, such as heavy metal. The statistical differences, however, were not as large as for digital immigrants, either suggesting that gender stereotypes have less of an affect on digital natives, or their definitions for music are not genre related. The genres favoured by females, in descending order of statistical significance, are:

1. Girl Groups
2. Boy Bands
3. Singer/songwriter
4. Dance
5. Top-40 pop
6. Pop
7. Emo
8. Brit Pop
9. Soundtracks
10. R&B
11. Non-musicals film soundtrack

It is interesting to note the presence of emo in this list. As previously noted, it occupies a curious position, being preferred by females under 30, and males over 30. More research definitely needs to be done on gender association and emo music, especially in that it is perceived to be gender neutral.

Overall, the data suggests that gender stereotypes are still being enforced in everyday music taste. Interestingly, though, these stereotypes seem to be located more in those over the age of 30, and, more specifically, those over the age of 18. Splitting the groups between those under and over 18 does not account for differences in regards to digital immersion – but it does show that the *more* one has grown up in digitality, i.e. the younger one is, the more likely it is that gender stereotypes will not affect one's musical tastes. It will be interesting to see if these differences are merely because of age, or if these youths will retain their gender neutrality as they age. It is promising to see that the youngest respondents feel free

to listen to whatever they feel like, regardless of gender perceptions, as has been shown in both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Alternative Genre Definitions

Part of the problem of correlating identity markers with musical taste is the subjective nature of genre definitions. While there are stereotypes associated with fans of specific styles, there has yet to be a study which examines how the individual defines their tastes. As has been seen, contemporary youth do not necessarily even categorize their tastes by genres, but use terms such as slow, fast, hard or soft. Perhaps this is due to the subjective nature of definitions, or the cross-over that has been happening between genres, as artists try to retain their share of the market. The high school students interviewed generally found out about new music from the charts, i.e.: music video stations or music-enabled mobile phones. For the most part, they listened to the newest and best on the charts, regardless of genre. Granted, this does place most of the music they are exposed to under the broad category of Top-40 popular music, leaving the subgenres, such as dance, pop, rock, country, etc., to become increasingly irrelevant.

The current digital landscape, coupled with music downloading and web-based MP3 stores, such as iTunes, is promoting a singles-based culture, where allegiance is to the song, not the artist or genre. The industries that support popular culture have always shown a tendency towards hypertextuality and interconnectedness, but with the digital revolution, this process has become much more transparent and immediate. Music-based shows, such as American Idol, X Factor, and the sitcom-based *Glee,* are exposing youth to a new market of older songs, which directly influences the charts. A good example would be the recent success of *Glee's* cover of *Journey*'s, 'Don't Stop Believing.' While their version remained near the top of the charts, it also encouraged their demographic of watchers to listen to the original single. It is important that the term single be used, because *Journey* recorded a full album, but the *Glee* cast only produced a single from that album. It is not about the band, itself, but about the song, or single. While this song has captured the attention of a new, youthful audience, it by no means predicts that the rest of *Journey*'s songs will enjoy a comeback. The current, singles-based

culture is one of ephemerality, which plays into the short attention span and need for constant motion of digital youth – life has become fast paced in the digital world.

With the concept of genre such a subjective and fluid entity – one viable alternative to the commercial definition of genres would be that of the *folksonomy*. The term, first coined by Thomas Vander Wal, is a combination of 'folk' and 'taxonomy'. Essentially, folksonomy is the way in which materials posted online are tagged, or defined, and how they join a larger community. As Sturtz notes, 'the centrally defining characteristics of folksonomies are thus their bottom-up construction, a lack of hierarchical structure, and their creation and use within a social context'[117]. In more practical terms:

> A folksonomy is the complete set of tags – one or two keywords – that users of a shared content management system apply to individual pieces of content in order to group or classify those pieces for retrieval. Users are able to instantly add terms to the folksonomy as they become necessary for a single unit of content.[118]

What is important to note about folksonomies, is that they are created by users themselves. As opposed to an imposed classification system, this is a bottom-up approach, which is constantly evolving as users update their tags. Originally, the tagging system was used for file sharing sites, such as Flickr, whereby users uploaded photos and tagged them with subjective terms, mostly for easy retrieval in the future. For example, a photo of a dog playing could be tagged with, 'dog', 'pet', 'outside', and 'playing'. The bookmarking site, del.i.cious, has also played a key role in the creation of folksonomies. Here, users are able to give tags to websites they have bookmarked for future retrieval, and organisation. Adam Mathes has noted that a key difference between the tagging involved with each website is that:

> While tags on Delicious are primarily from users of web documents that were written by another party, Flickr is primarily used by individuals to manage their own digital images, and the majority of the tags are users tagging photos they created themselves. This is not absolute; the system does have the option of allowing users designated as friends or family to tag a users' photo. Additionally, users can and do enter images other created into the system, often

[117] David Sturtz, 'Communal Categorization: The Folksonomy,' *INFO622: Content Representation* (December 16, 2004): 1.
[118] Ibid., 1.

> from web sites. This use of the system is much more like Delicious, but seems to be a small fraction of the use.[119]

Mathes also refers to folksonomy as an organic system of classification, with no sense of hierarchy. They are, essentially, user-generated sets of terms, used to describe an online object, with no predetermined set of classification or terms. Folksonomies work well for del.icio.us and Flickr, because they are 'loosely-defined, developing fields'[120], as opposed to hierarchical schemes. Users maintain their own vernacular, or the common vocabulary of users, to define objects they interact with, or find information from. While del.icio.us tags and organises cites, and Flickr organises photos, how is folksonomy applicable to music?

The use of folksonomy, in regards to music classification, has yet to be examined to the extent of del.icio.us and Flickr and, as such, there is little information on how tagging works to categorize songs and artists. The most obvious, highly-used music site to employ folksonomies/tagging as a way of defining songs and artists, is last.fm. last.fm holds artist biographies, upcoming information about tours, photos, streaming MP3 files, and most importantly, artist radio and user-generated charts. Members of last.fm can opt to have their iTunes and Spotify accounts sync to their online profile, which, in turn, tracks the songs you listen to, and calculates your personal listening chart: for example, your most played songs and artists, broken down into various time spans. As it tracks your listening habits, it can offer suggestions on artists you may like, or even offer free MP3 downloads of songs that you may like.

Similar to the artist suggestion feature, artist radio provides a personalised radio station, based on artists, songs and genres you like. To begin a new radio station, type a song, artist or genre into the search field, and the radio station will play songs you *should* like based on your initial search field. This process works by means of folksonomies and tagging. As more people use the system, the better radio stations become at suggesting appropriate songs. As users listen to their personalised radio stations, they are able to acknowledge whether they like or hate a song, improving future recommendations. The system is not based on genres, in the

[119] Adam Mathes, 'Folksonomies-cooperative classification and communication through shared media,' *Computer Mediated Communication* (2004): 3.
[120] Sturtz, 'Communal Categorization,' 4.

traditional sense, but on the tags provided by the users. It works on the basic level that, if you like a song, other people who like it should also like other songs you do,

last.fm tags go well beyond the definitions typically used in genre definitions. Just as photos on Flickr can be tagged with abstract, or personal, tags, such as 'pet' or 'favourites,' the same holds true for last.fm. Quite often, songs will be tagged with abstract terms, such as 'popular,' 'favourite,' 'sexy,' or even text-speak terms, such as '<3.' For interest's sake, the following is a selection of tags used to describe Lady Gaga, an artist who would traditionally be labelled as pop:

> 00s; 2000s; <3; addictive; alternative; amazing; American; beautiful; better than Britney; bitch; catchy; club; dance; dance pop; dance-pop; disco; diva; electro; electro pop; electro-pop; electronic; electronica; electropop; energetic; English; experimental; female; female vocalist; female vocalists; female vocals; fierce; fun; gaga; gay; glam; guilty pleasure; guilty pleasures; hot; house; icon; indie; lady; lady gaga; legend; love at first listen; new york; party; poker face; pop; pop bitches; pop dance; rnb; rock; sexy; singer-songwriter; synthpop; techno; urban pop; usa; 2008[121]

As we can see from this list, many of these terms are not ones that would normally arise in the definition of pop. In particular, 'amazing,' 'better than Britney,' 'legend,' and 'fierce' are subjective terms, applied by various listeners to describe their personal feelings about the artist. This list does demonstrate, however, an important downfall of the user-generated tagging system – the loss of quality control, through confusion of terms. Tags tend to be repeated, with slight variations, such as 'guilty pleasure' and 'guilty pleasures,' as well as 'female,' 'female vocalist,' 'female vocalists,' and 'female vocals.' Had these tags all been standardised, 'female vocalist' would probably have predominated. Mathes makes note of this limitation of folksonomies as well, when he notes:

> The problems inherent in an uncontrolled vocabulary lead to a number of limitations and weaknesses in folksonomies. Ambiguity of the tags can emerge as users apply the same tag in different ways. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the lack of synonym control can lead to different tags being used for the same concept, precluding collocation.[122]

Ambiguous and subjective terms become even more apparent in the tags used for individual songs. Using Lady Gaga as an example once more, the following are

[121] last.fm, 'Tags for Lady Gaga,' last.fm, http://www.last.fm/music/Lady+GaGa/+tags (accessed March 29, 2010).
[122] Mathes, 'Folksonomies,' 5.

tags used for her song, 'Bad Romance,' her most-listened to song, as reported by last.fm as of March 29, 2010:

> 00s; <3; addictive; amazing; American; awesome; bad romance; brilliant lyrics; can't stop listening; catchy; choreography; dance; dance all night; disco; electronic; electronica; electropop; eletropop; epic; extremely addictive; fashion; favourites; female; female vocalist; female vocalists; from another world; fun; gaga; gay; gossip girl; guilty pleasure; hot; i can imagine that song in a movie; i want to be independent listening to; i want to listen to this all the time; i wish i could love someone listening to; i wish i could make a video for this; jumping; lady gaga; love; love at first listen; love it; makes me feel sexy; orgasmic; party; party time; pop; sex; sexy; sexy as fuck; songs for travel; songs that save my life; summer party; teardrops; the best; the fame monster; unforgettable; usa; want to see live; 2009[123]

One thing I find particularly interesting about this list of tags is how many of them seem to be themes for playlists. This ties into the singles-based culture promoted by digital downloading. In order to listen to singles, people usually create playlists of their favourites, for organisational purposes and listening effectiveness. It seems clear that people are tagging songs they wish to organise into playlists. The most obvious themes for 'Bad Romance' include:

1. extremely addictive
2. favourites
3. guilty pleasure
4. I can imagine that song in a movie
5. I want to be independent listening to
6. I want to listen to this all the time
7. I wish I could love someone listening to
8. I wish I could make a video for this
9. Party time
10. The best
11. Songs that save my life

It is interesting that the vast majority of tags are not traditional genre distinctions. In fact, of the 59, only 7 are actual genres, and of those, one is repeated as a typo:

1. dance
2. disco
3. electronic
4. electronica
5. electropop
6. eletropop
7. pop

[123] last.fm, 'Tags for Lady Gaga – Bad Romance,' last.fm, http://www.last.fm/music/Lady+GaGa/_/Bad+Romance/+tags (accessed March 29, 2010).

With its potential limitations, such as ambiguity, subjectivity, spelling mistakes, and generally vague terms, are folksonomies an appropriate alternative to traditional genre distinctions? This community-based approach has some benefits, in that the hierarchical structure of genres is minimized, as well as giving a voice to the individual. Because each tag shows up on the site, without naming the individual, you can get a sense of how others react to particular songs and artists, as opposed to how the music industry wants to define them. As this process evolves, it will hopefully refine itself, and continue to give voice to the individual and community who are actually consuming and listening to the music.

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This chapter has explored various identity markers and their relationship to musical taste, including gender, age, education, and marital status within digitality. Previous studies have focused on a single identity marker, without considering the entire identity map. Where this study differs from others, is this exploration of diverse indicators, interconnected and not distinct from one another, to produce a map of taste, which includes both music, as well as general tastes, such as leisure activities. Socio-economic status is an important indicator of taste, but access to financial resources can potentially limit involvement in activities; however, in regards to music, the internet allows for easy access, allowing for a democratization of musical taste. Debates continually occur over whether appropriate knowledge is required to fully comprehend a piece of music, but 'understanding' and enjoyment are quite different concepts, with understandment not always correlating with enjoyment. I suppose the question then becomes: is music solely meant for enjoyment, or as an exercise in mental engagement – I would hope that both have worth.

My results suggest that cultural indicators are not distinct, so should be studied together, in order to produce a map of musical tastes, while respecting the individual. While some indicators produce more dramatic correlations than others, they nevertheless work together, so studying them in isolation is to understand only a fraction of identity formation. The development of taste is a complicated and personal matter, one that is influenced by environment, lived experiences, personality and genetics. It is easy to apply generalisations to large groups of people, based on education, gender or age, but it is also important to note the subjectiveness of taste,

and how people define it. No two people engage with, or hear music in the same way; for example, where someone listens to Celine Dion for her dramatic flair and singing abilities, for another, it may involve a memory of an important event. This is something which needs to be taken into account with future research on musical taste and identity.

Also, similar to the differences in consumption patterns, the way in which artists and songs are defined, at the genre level, can be dramatically different from person to person, based on musical exposure and knowledges. The eclecticisation of tastes, promoted by the internet, often removes genres from the equation, allowing people to listen to different genres, juxtaposed through playlists of personalised radio stations. As our singles-based culture intensifies, the focus on genres will decrease. In order to accommodate this, a system of tagging has emerged on sites such as last.fm, allowing people to organise music in a personal way, removed from traditional definitions constructed by the music industry.

As the interview and survey results have shown, taste is based less on genre than on outside influences, such as friends, social networking sites, video-based music charts, and internet suggestions. With digital culture, there is a move away from genre alignment to listening to whatever is entertaining for the individual. Interviews with the general public have shown that music is an integral aspect of their lives, something with which they form deep emotional connections, but not bound by genres. They are more focused on listening to music which has meaning for them, whether through past experiences, mood regulation, danceability, its musicality, or just because it makes them feel good. Tastes have become increasingly eclectic, as well as fragmented from the album, with a focus on singles. This notion of fragmentation and eclecticism is encouraged by Web 2.0, with the popularity of social networking sites, and transparency of online development of identity, increasing these aesthetics. These processes go beyond that of postmodernity – online and offline identities are no longer seen as separate, but as fragments of a very eclectic single identity.

PART II: INTERNET: COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY

2.1: THE INTERNET AND EVERYDAY LIFE

This chapter will explore the social and communicative aspects of the internet, and how they are affecting sociability and communication between people. Generational differences and their affects on the acceptance of social networking devices will be examined, as well as the changing role of anonymity. This chapter will not be concerned with an historical account of the internet; however, it will focus on the important shifts in internet functionality since the inception of Web 2.0, through to what is presently occurring within internet culture. It will begin with a brief introduction to the different 'ages' of internet research and continue with an exploration of the perceived invisibility of the internet. Before outlining how the current study's respondents are interacting with the internet in everyday life, this chapter will also explore the concept of a 'mainstream user' as well as outlining the definitions of digital natives and digital immigrants. Throughout this thesis, distinctions are made between the digital natives, those grown up fully immersed in digital culture and well versed in the social aspects of the internet, and the digital immigrants, those who may struggle to accept the participatory aspects of the internet.

As a starting reference point, Barry Wellman, in 2004, wrote an interesting article, outlining the three ages of internet studies[124]. Wellman, while he acknowledges that pre-internet, prophetic studies have occurred since Roxanne Hiltz's 1978 book, *The Network Nation*, maintains that the first age of internet study began 'ten years ago,' or, the early 1990s. He notes that, in this period, the internet 'became more than an academic chatroom'[125]. It was a time when the internet was opened up to the general public and was no longer the private domain of scientists and academics sharing findings and information via text-based files. The internet thus became 'dot.com-ed,' with a boom of internet entrepreneurs looking to capitalise on the developing market. Even at this early stage of study, Wellman's

[124] Barry Wellman, 'The Three Ages of Internet Studies: ten, five and zero years ago,' *New Media and Society* 6.1 (2004): 123-129.
[125] Ibid., 124.

research focused on the emerging social dynamics of the internet, in which he maintained that the internet was best seen as a 'computer-supported social network' and spoke about how 'intertwined offline relationships were with online relationships'[126].

The second era, 'five years ago,' or, beginning in the late 1990s (approximately 1998), saw the need for policy and governmental involvement with regards to the functionality of the internet. During this stage, the internet moved from hackers and scientists to the mainstream public domain. This era saw the shift from a new, *out-there* technology to a tool that has become indispensable to our lives; remarkable, but nevertheless quite ordinary. As Wellman puts it, 'the internet has become an important thing but not a special thing. It has become the utility of the masses, rather than the plaything of computer scientists'[127].

Wellman documents the third age as the internet's present age. He notes that his prophetic research regarding the social nature of the internet in the 1990s, has since become reality. The third age brings the social aspects of the internet to the main stage. The technology, indispensable to the general public, is an important tool for creating and maintaining relationships, both on- and off-line. Wellman notes that theoretical concepts would be, and subsequently have been, developed regarding these relationships and functions of social networking sites. This chapter will highlight some of the theoretical and ethnographic research on the third age of internet studies, before delving into the results of the current study: the internet's social functions within iPod culture and digitality.

The notion of the internet as a commonplace/indispensable technology has been addressed by a few sociological studies. In their 2004 article titled 'Has the Internet Become Indispensible?' Hoffman, Novak and Venkatesh note that something becomes indispensable when 'it becomes part of one's daily routine,' while this ritualization 'provides a sense of security and predictability'[128]. Because the adoption rate of US internet users far exceeds that of any previous communication technology, the internet can be designated as an irreversible

[126] Ibid., 125.
[127] Ibid., 125.
[128] Donna Hoffman, Thomas Novak and Alladi Venkatesh, 'Has the Internet become indispensable?' *Communications of the ACM* 47.7 (July 2004): 40.

technology. According to the article, from 2000 to 2003, the number of online US citizens increased from 86 million to 126 million. The internet has become so ingrained in our daily lives that it is inconceivable how we could maintain our current standard of living without it.

The internet's indispensability or, as I prefer to refer to it, *invisibility*, has also been noted in Don Tapscott's book, *Grown Up Digital* (2009), which is a re-examination of the themes discussed in his previous book, *Growing Up Digital* (1997). Tapscott discusses the role of the Net Generation within internet culture, as well as within the wider society, much of it premised on the interactions with his own children. Of note is an anecdotal story he tells of his younger children and their perception of the internet. Tapscott's children are quite aware of the digital divide, not in regards to who does or does not have access to the internet, but between those who regard the internet as a foreign tool and those who have grown up knowing and altering the way in which it is constructed and used. Tapscott regularly uses the metaphor that for the Net Generation, internet technology is like the air: a tool to be used, but it is the content that affects them, not the technology itself; whereas, while older generations attempt to find the same content, they are also more fascinated and confused by the technology that brought it to them. As Tapscott notes:

> Net Gen kids growing up looked at computers in the same way boomers look at TV. Boomers don't marvel at the technology or wonder how television transfers video and audio through thing air, we simply watch the screen. TV is a fact of life. So it has been with Net Geners and computers. And as technology relentlessly advances each month, young people just breathe it in, like improvements in the atmosphere.[129] (19)

The following recounting of a conversation between Tapscott and his family conveys the notion of the invisibility of digital technology, as seen with younger generations:

> In early 1997, I spent an hour as a guest on a Canadian television program called *Pamela Wallin Live*, helping to demonstrate how to surf the web. The point of the show was to illustrate to the viewers the wealth of material available on the Net. When I returned home, my wife Ana, my most trusted critic, told me she thought the show was good, but that our son Alex, who was 12 at the time, thought the whole idea of the program was dumb.
>
> Ana said to him: "Hey Alex, Dad's going to be on TV live for an hour. Let's go watch."

[129] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital,* 19.

"Cool, what's the show about?" Alex replied.
"Dad's going to use the Internet on TV – surf the web," Ana said.
"That's the dumbest TV show I've ever heard of. Why would anyone want to watch Dad use the Internet?" Alex asked.
"Everyone is interested in this new technology, how to use it, ad how it works. It's a technology revolution," said Ana.
"Mom, this is so embarrassing. All my friends are going to see this. You don't need to show people how to use the internet," said Alex.

The next day over breakfast, to hear it for myself, I asked him why he didn't want to watch the show.
"Dad, no offense, but I think you adults are obsessed with technology. You call this a technology revolution and you are so fascinated by how the technology works. Imagine some other technology, Dad." At this point I sensed he was going to use an analogy, and sure enough he pointed to the television. "The television – is that a technology to you, Dad? Imagine a TV show where people watch you surf television! Wow! Let's see if my dad can find a football game on television! Now my dad is going to try and find a sitcom!"

At this point his 13-year-old sister Niki came to his support (a rare thing), embellishing a point from a previous conversation.
"Yeah Dad, how about the refrigerator? Remember, it's a technology too. Why don't we have a TV show where we can all watch you surf the fridge?" To rub it in, she said, "Check this out, my dad has found some meatloaf! This is just fascinating television!".[130]

In the interviews I conducted with high school students, when asked about their daily internet habits, their answers also reflected this notion of technological invisibility. For the most part, the interviewees would talk about how they were on the internet 'all the time,' and while some found it difficult to describe exactly what they were actually doing on the internet, an overwhelming majority stated they were spending time connecting with people they already knew offline, through instant messenger services such as MSN, or other social networking sites. Calling, texting, or even emailing people was not considered fast enough; they preferred to instant message their friends in order to receive instant feedback. Messenger services allow people to have real-time conversations with multiple people, while also multitasking. Tapscott also notes that multitasking is a defining feature of the Net Generation.

When asked how long they spend on the internet, the students did not seem to have a good sense of how long they were actually spending online. When asked how long they spent online, answers included:

[130] Ibid., 19-20.

Male/Grade 9/Burns Lake, Canada: About three hours per night

Female/Grade 9/Burns Lake, Canada: Talk to my boyfriend online everyday

Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: Depends if I have homework

Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: Sometimes when I get home, and then in the evening after I'm done homework, or after dinner, just kinda off and on when I have nothing else to do.

Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: Usually in the evening for me. I dunno, just depends on who's on to talk to and what we're talking about.

Their activities of choice were generally limited to MSN, YouTube, music, social networking sites and 'looking stuff up':

Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: Usually MSN, just talking to people. Sometimes I look up pictures I have to draw, but that's about it, usually I just talk to people.

Male/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: Just talk to friends. Or Facebook or something.

Male/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: MSN, Facebook, and downloading movies and stuff like that.

Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: I just go on all my favourite sites, and listen to music at the same time. And talk to friends online. It's pretty fun.

Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada: I'm usually just looking at stuff. Just listening to music.

Male/16/Edinburgh, UK: Bebo, MySpace, MSN, the usual.

Female/12/Edinburgh, UK: Bebo, MSN, YouTube

Male/15/Edinburgh, UK: Just talking to people, like, MSN. Like, watching videos and that.

There is a sense that these high school students view the internet as they would their music: something that is always there, that one does not need to be actively engaged with all the time. The internet, for these students, is a communication and socialization device, music player, and boredom reliever, not something that requires immense amounts of mental energy, but can also be an informational tool, when needed. With broadband high-speed internet being the norm, people do not have to

limit their time on the internet, but can leave browsers open while they carry out other tasks in their immediate environment. Like listening to music, the internet doesn't always require immediate attention, but is something one can multitask with.

For these youths, the technology has indeed become *invisible*. It is there to provide entertainment and communication, without their having an immediate awareness of its technology. Social networking sites allow for multiple and immediate connections between people, as well as backgrounded communication. For the most part, contemporary youths, as will be shown in Chapter 2.3, do not acknowledge a distinction between their online and offline identities. They state that they do not rely on the anonymity that the internet can provide, but rather use it as a way to communicate and strengthen friendships that are already in place in the 'real world.' The invisibility of the technology is such that youths would not even consider redefining themselves online – for them, the world on the internet and the world off are one in the same – there is no distinction to be made.

This presents a large shift in internet involvement from the users according to Sherry Turkle in her influential work on the internet and identity formation: *Life on the Screen* (1995). Located within Wellman's second age of internet scholarship, Turkle focused on the ways in which people constructed their online identities, specifically in online gaming and text-based forums. For Turkle's subjects, their internet and real life identities were two distinct entities; anonymity allowed people to explore aspects of their identity not suitable in real life, or to construct an entirely new identity completely removed from their 'real self.' In the words of Turkle, 'the internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize modern life'[131].

While Turkle's descriptions of machine versus man, and people as 'plugged-in technobodies,'[132] is a precursor to the invisibility of the internet and computer cultures, her focus falls short, in that it deals mainly with those who are highly involved in the actual technological side of the internet, as well as those involved with role-playing online games, in which it is easy and desirable to create new identities, often entirely removed from real life. As we have moved into the third age

[131] Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1996): 180.
[132] Ibid., 177.

of internet studies, the internet's invisibility and position in the mainstream have pushed the experiences of the online gamers into that of subculture. While there will always be online role-players and gamers who change and explore identities, they are no longer in the majority of internet users. Mainstream use has shifted primarily towards communication and transferring offline activities to their online version for the purposes of immediacy and ease of use.

The issue of fragmentation of identity due to internet involvement, will be explored further, but at this stage, Turkle's findings have been touched on, in order to situate her book within the historical context of internet scholarship. *Life on the Screen* has become an important read concerning internet and identity, especially as much of the research concerned with the social aspects of the internet has been scattered, both methodologically and thematically. Researchers have tackled the subject from a variety of disciplines: sociology, computer science, psychology, medicine, and education, to name a few, but for the purposes of the present study, I will focus mainly on those which derive from a sociological or psychological perspective.

Much of this research has been ethnographic, based on specific localities or focused on aspects of the digital divide. As with any research dealing with technology, though, as the technology evolves, the research soon becomes obsolete. The ephemeral nature of the internet can be seen as akin to the process of changing popularity in music. Because of the relatively new status of internet studies, an adequate and underlying methodology has not yet been established. Studies differ in academic success and methodology. This section of the chapter will deal predominately with articles related to the everyday functions and activities of internet users and the internet's social functions.

While 'The Internet in Everyday Life' (2001) by Maria Bakardjieva and Richard Smith succeeds in identifying a range of situations in which re-located people use the internet, it falls into the category of internet studies which are quite problematic. The authors strove to articulate what the 'average user' was doing online, but the sample included a 'relatively large presence of immigrants'[133]. Although Bakardjieva and Smith acknowledge that this may affect their results, they

[133] Maria Bakardjieva and Richard Smith, 'The Internet in Everyday Life: Computer Networking from the Standpoint of the Domestic User,' *New Media and Society* 3.1 (2001): 70.

still ultimately maintain that their results are a representation of the internet experiences of the average user, which are as follows:

1. Isolation brought about by circumstances such as sickness, dysfunctional marriage, single parenthood, retirement and unemployment
2. Dislocation or recurrent change of location
3. Globally spread family and social networks
4. Lack of intellectual challenge in current work
5. Uncertainty or dissatisfaction with current job
6. Sense of belonging to a dispersed community of interest – quite often a community of suffering[134]

It is not to say that many of these purposes do not represent the 'average user', but seem more reflective of a displaced person. Their experiences should not be discounted, but rather, quantified as to their demographic composition. Also, there is no definition in place for the 'average user.' While this is not the fault of Bakardjieva and Smith, in particular, it is something which needs to be addressed and established within internet studies in general.

Janet Morahan-Martin and Phyllis Schumacher, with 'Loneliness and social uses of the Internet' (2003), further explored the issue of isolation and loneliness. Drawn from a psychological and mathematical background, this study examines loneliness and the internet as a correlation and dependence phenomenon: 'excessive Internet use causes loneliness vs. lonely individuals are more likely to use the Internet excessively.'[135] The study found that, partially due to the online disinhibition affect, lonely people were better able to forge connections online than they could in real life. This would presume that people are lonely because they lack the needed relationship skills in a face-to-face scenario, perhaps due to emotional or physical factors. Unfortunately, though, the study also uncovered that although lonely people were becoming more social online, their pre-existing offline relationships were often damaged. As noted:

> Ironically, although lonely users reported enhanced social behaviours online, their use of the Internet interfered with their non-Internet social activity as well as occupational adjustment, and caused guilt. Lonely users also were more likely to go online when they were lonely, down or anxious as well as to relax and kill time. Taken together, this suggests a vicious circle whereby lonely individuals go online to fill social voids and emptiness in their life, but their

[134] Ibid., 71.
[135] Janet Morahan-Martin and Phyllis Schumacher, 'Loneliness and social uses of the Internet,' *Computers in Human Behaviour* 19.6 (2003): 660.

> online time creates voids their non-Internet social life and creates other real life problems. Thus, neither of the hypotheses about the direction of relationship between loneliness and Internet use is sufficient. Instead, the relationship may be bi-directional.[136]

This would also suggest that people could be self-medicating personality disorders with internet use, which is not dissimilar to how people use music to alter their mood[137]. Music, like the internet, can become addictive, and almost a crutch for underlying emotional problems.

The drug metaphor would also be applicable to the use of social networking sites, especially by digital youth. While lonely people may use social networking sites in order to establish relationships they may find difficult to cultivate in real life, many youth use these sites as a way to maintain relationships, keep up with current gossip, and help to make new friends. These sites can definitely initiate addictive behaviours, in which people feel compelled to check them numerous times a day, in order not to feel left out.

As social networking sites are a relatively new phenomenon, credible research surrounding them is just starting to emerge. Researchers are still questioning how to deal with issues related to social networking sites, much like internet studies. One interesting paper, 'Rhythms of social interaction: messaging within a massive online network' (2006), by Scott Golder, Dennis Wilkinson and Bernardo Huberman, examines the social networking message habits of college-aged students (the majority user demographic), in order to observe and determine patterns of relationships, particularly by locality. The study removed the subjective nature of survey and interview responses and, instead, used an anonymous collection of messages and 'pokes' which occurred over a specific time period. The data set represented quite a large-scale analysis of students – 284 million messages and 76.9

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[136] Ibid., 669.

[137] Tiffany Field et al., 'Music Shifts Frontal EEG in Depressed Adolescents,' *Adolescence* 33 (1998); Michaelle A. Cameron, Julie Baker, Mark Peterson and Karin Braunsberger, 'The effects of music, wait-length evaluation, and mood on a low-cots wait experience,' *Journal of Business Research* 56.6 (June, 2003): 421-430; William F. Thompson, E. Glenn Schellenberg and Gabriela Husain, 'Arousal, Mood, and The Mozart Effect,' *Psychological Science* 12.3 (2001): 248-251; Carolyn J. Murrock, 'Music and Mood,' in *Psychology of Moods*, ed. Anita V. Clark (Nova Science Publishers, 2005): 141-156.

million pokes sent by 4.2 million Facebook users from 496 North American colleges and universities between February 2004 and March 2006[138].

From their data set, the authors found correlations between messages and locality: to whom messages were being sent and whether it was to people within the same college or another. They also determined the amount of unwanted messages received, by examining whether they were reciprocated or not. Perhaps most interesting was their examination of temporal rhythms. By examining when messages or pokes were sent, the authors mapped out patterns of social networking use for a wide spectrum of college students – much more time is spent on Facebook during the school week as opposed to weekends, when people are generally socialising and not near a computer. As the authors suggest, this schedule would be entirely different for those in a corporate setting, where social networking sites are typically banned in the workplace.

The study found that Facebook is 'a dominant locus for college students' electronic social activity'[139] and has become part of the normal college experience, mirroring daily and weekly schedules. In their own words:

> We found a strong weekly temporal pattern to college students' Facebook use, a grouping of students with similar temporal patterns by school, and a seasonal variation in the proportion of messages sent within a school. Our study further revealed that messages are mostly sent to friends, but most friends do not receive messages, demonstrating the problematic status of the "friends" link and the value of messages over friend links for studying online social networking systems.[140]

My own study reinforces the notion that social networking sites are the domain of contemporary youth. Of the entire survey dataset, the results that yielded the highest statistical variance was for use of social networking sites in the younger generations (under 30) as compared to the older generations (over 30). An ANOVA test revealed a statistically significant difference between the groups of 7.23E42.

[138] Scott A. Golder, Dennis M. Wilkinson, and Bernado A. Huberman, 'Rhythms of Social Interaction: Messaging Within a Massive Online Network,' in *Communities and Technologies* eds. Charles Steinfield, Brian T. Pentland, Mark Ackerman and Noshir Contractor (London: Springer, 2007): 41-66.
[139] Ibid., 61.
[140] Ibid., 61.

Strangely, a paper presented at the 2007 ascilite conference in Singapore provided quite different results[141].

'The Net Generation are not big users of Web 2.0 technologies: Preliminary findings,' Kennedy, Dalgarno, Gray, Judd, Waycott, et al., found that the Net Generation, or Digital Natives, was not using Web 2.0, including social networking sites, to the extent that was hypothesised or perceived by the mainstream press. Their dataset was based on responses from 2588 first year undergrad students from three universities in Australia: University of Melbourne (45.5%), Wollongong (27.5%) and Charles Sturt (27%). The gender balance heavily favoured the females (females: 68.9%; males: 31%). In regards to the question of how often one used 'social networking software on the web (e.g. MySpace, Trendster),' the mean was 1.9 on a scale of 7. Answers ranged from (7) Several times per day, (6) Once per day, (5) Several times per week, (4) Once per week, (3) Once per month, (2) Every few months, (1) Once per year, and (0) Missing/not used.[142]

Of interest, in almost every aspect of their dataset, the 'missing/not used' category contained a high number of responses, which was not addressed in the paper: why were they not used, or missing? In regards to the question on the usage of social networking sites, the 'missing/not used' category contained 56.5% of the responses. An examination of the tables included in their paper would lead one to believe that they included the 'missing/not used' data in the calculation of their means, ultimately causing the means to be much lower than they should be, and skewing their results. While the authors conclude that, because of the low mean of 1.9, most of their respondents are not using social networking sites, yet of those who responded favourably to the question, (16%) chose either (7) Several times per day, or (6) Once per day.[143]

This paper seems to run counter to my research on the subject, as well as common knowledge. Books such as *Born Digital,* [144] *Grown Up Digital*[145], and my

[141] Gregor Kennedy et al., 'The Net Generation are not big users of Web 2.0 technologies: Preliminary findings,' (paper presented at the ascilite conference, Singapore, 2007).
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: understanding the first generation of digital natives* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).
[145] Don Tapscott, *Grown up digital: how the Net Generation is changing your world* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

own research, have shown that Web 2.0 technologies and social networking sites, in particular, are indeed the domain of contemporary youth. Youth are spearheading the technologies and social change, which have and are occurring because of the technological advances. Tapscott and Palfrey, in their respective books, provide almost a handbook for digital immigrants (the older generations) to understand digital natives. There has been a small body of work written on the Net Generation, but mostly by 'outsiders', or digital immigrants, looking into what is, for them, a foreign culture. They are mostly guidebooks to help navigate the world of digital natives, and how professions and markets will change as they, and the technology, changes.

Taking on the role of mainstream internet researcher, Tapscott provides a pivotal documentation of the Net Generation, coining the term in his book, *Growing up Digital: the Rise of the Net Generation*. Tapscott, in 1997, described the Net Generation as those who were 20 years old and younger. Today, the oldest of the Net Generation would be approximately 30 years old. Tapscott notes that this generation has grown up with internet technology and, as such, is defined by its relationship with it. Unlike the prior generation, the Baby Boomers, who grew up with television, the Net Generation are users, as opposed to merely viewers. The television culture of the baby boomers defined the generation as viewers and listeners of broadcasts, whereas the Net Generation are directly involved in the technology and work to inscribe its change and evolution, creating a participatory ideal. The Net Generation are the digital haves, while their baby boomer parents are the digital have-nots, not only of technology, but of the information and knowledges required to understand and manipulate the technology[146]. The divide is essentially, as discussed before, between those who see the technology, and those for whom it is invisible. As Tapscott notes:

> For the first time in history, children are more comfortable, knowledgeable, and literate than their parents about an innovation central to society. And it is through the use of the digital media that the N-Generation will develop and superimpose its culture on the rest of society…they are a force for social transformation.[147]

[146] Don Tapscott, *Growing up digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* (New York: McGaw-Hill, 1997): 3.
[147] Tapscott, *Growing up Digital*, 1-2.

Tapscott recently published an updated version of *Growing up Digital*, titled *Grown up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* (2009). Aimed primarily at parents and employees of the Net Generation, the book provides an account of how the Net Generation is impacting society and the workforce, and what should and could be done in order to understand and work with them for maximum effectiveness. Tapscott identifies eight characteristics that he feels defines the Net Generation:

> They prize freedom and freedom of choice. They want to customize things, make them their own. They're natural collaborators, who enjoy a conversation, not a lecture. They'll scrutinize you and your organization. They insist on integrity. They want to have fun, even at work and at school. Speed is normal. Innovation is part of life.[148]

Tapscott's book is of interest, in that it defines characteristics of the Net Generation and how they differ from baby boomers, in order to help people understand where this generation is coming from, and how to effectively work with and motivate them. From an ethnographic standpoint, it tends to come across as very 'us' versus 'them.' Readers from the Net Generation would feel that the information is quite obvious and perhaps condescending. Tapscott treats the Net Generation as almost a unique species, entirely removed from the Baby Boomers Generation and a force to be dealt with and adapted to. Fortunately, he also identifies the Net Generation as a group that others can learn from, as they utilize technology for the greater good, as opposed to the perception of laziness they have incurred in the mainstream press.

In this same vein, Palfrey and Gasser's *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (2008), also gives an account of the Net Generation, or as they call them, digital natives. Similarly to Tapscott, Palfrey and Gasser define digital natives as those born after 1980, who have grown up entirely immersed in digital culture and technology. *Born Digital* identifies and describes the digital culture and how it affects, and is being affected by, digital natives. It is written in the same, 'handbook for outsiders' style as Tapscott's work, but I feel it is a book that both digital natives and academics can relate to and find valuable. The book explores how digital natives have changed societal norms, including issues related to identity formation, security, innovation, creating and activism. Palfrey and Gasser have

[148] Taopscott, *Grown up Digital,* 6-7.

painted a picture of digital natives, as a group of people focused on creating and participation, as opposed to passive involvement with their culture and politics. Digital natives are noted as being generally positive about the future, and people who easily integrate new technologies into their lives. As described by the authors, digital natives are social beings, in constant contact and communication with their peers:

> There is one thing you know for sure. These kids are different. They study, work, write, and interact with each other in ways that are very different from the ways that you did growing up. They read blogs rather than newspapers. They often meet each other online before they meet in person. They probably don't even know what a library card looks like, much less have one, and if they do, they've probably never used it. They get their music online – often for free, illegally – rather than buying it in record stores. They're more likely to send an instant message (IM) than pick up the telephone to arrange a date later in the afternoon. They adopt and pal around with virtual Neopets online instead of pound puppies. And they're connected to one another by a common culture. Major aspects of their lives – social interactions, friendships, civic activities – are mediated by digital technologies. And they've never known any other way of life.[149]

While *Being Digital* and *Grown up Digital* are written by academic writers, the writing style is focused on helping the layperson understand and interact with digital natives. Purely academic work on the Net Generation is still lacking, on the whole, but there are a few articles that have used sociological and psychological methodologies to explore the subject. Ruth Rettie, of Kingston University, UK, for example, looked at the changing values and cultural considerations between the Net Generation, as compared to older generations in her article entitled 'Net Generation Culture' (2002). Rettie presents three hypotheses:

(1) The cultural values of the Net Generation Internet user are different from those of the Baby Boomer Generation.
(2) The cultural values of the more experienced Internet user are different from those of less experienced users
(3) The cultural values of Internet users are different from those of non-users.

Hypothesis (2) and (3) are to ensure that any change in (1) is not merely on account of the generation gap and any internet use difference. As Rettie notes:

> The Net Generation could just be an instance of the traditional generation gap. Generation gap is measured as the difference (in attitudes) between groups of different ages at one time; differences in attitudes of equivalent age groups at different points in time are not considered generation gaps…The process of

[149] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital*, 2.

> acculturation may explain generation gap. If the younger generation acquire new cultural values more quickly this will create a generation gap until the older generation too acquire these values. Thus in periods of cultural change the generation gap will initially increase.[150]

Rettie's results supported all three of the hypotheses, indicating that it is not merely the generation gap that is responsible for the attitude and cultural shift in those highly involved in internet culture, but that the shift is evolving throughout the generations.

Rettie, as well as the Australian Net Generation study discussed earlier, represent the beginnings of academic study concerned with the Net Generation and, as such, are based on preliminary findings. It will be interesting to see how this field evolves, and which methodological standpoint will emerge as the forerunner. There needs to be a long-term study conducted on the Net Generation and how they, themselves, are evolving socially. There are already remarkable differences between those at each end of the Net Generation age spectrum, and perhaps new definitions and descriptions need to be put in place to further divide the generation.

The way that contemporary youth are socially engaged is an important aspect of internet culture, as well as how these changes will filter through to the older generations. Researchers have examined how the internet affects social life, in general, and how online networks function as social networks[151]. Sociological studies, such as David Beer and Roger Burrows', 'Sociology and, of and in Web 2.0: Some Initial Considerations' (2007), have attempted to map the network society and develop a typology, within sociology, as a way to research and understand internet culture.

Beer and Burrows begin their paper with an accurate description of the speed at which this field is moving, and the consequential problems with adequate examination and documentation. They note that their paper, by the time it is published, 'will be mundane'[152]. The ephemeral nature of the internet, entwined with rapidly changing social norms, are major challenges in the sociological study of internet culture. The authors acknowledge the invisibility of the technology, and

[150] Ruth Rettie, 'Net Generation Culture,' *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research* 3.4 (2002): 256.
[151] Manuel Castells, 'Towards a Sociology of the Network Society,' *Contemporary Sociology* 29.5 (2000): 693-699; Barry Wellman, 'Computer Networks as Social Networks,' *Science* 293.5537 (September 14, 2001): 2031-2034.
[152] David Beer and Roger Burrows, 'Sociology And, of and in Web 2.0: Some Initial Considerations,' *Sociological Research Online* 12 (2007): 1.

note that its documentation is important, in order to not lose sight of its importance in culture change. These internet technologies:

> Have very quickly become incorporated within the mundane realities of everyday life (especially for many young people) and, as such, are in danger of quickly sinking from sociological view unless we remain alert to their broader significance.[153]

Beer and Burrows outline what is included in the participatory culture of Web 2.0: blogs, wikis, social networking sites, folksonomies, and mashups. Within these Web 2.0 categories, they draw out three important, recurring themes: (1) the production and consumption of content, (2) the mainstreaming of private information posted to the public domain (3) and the emergence of a new rhetoric of 'democratisation'[154]. In their description of what a potential sociology of Web 2.0 would look like, they state the importance of gathering information from the inside. It is not going to be adequate to study the Web 2.0 in a lab-style situation; in order to understand and interact with its users, researchers will need to integrate into the culture. I have found this particularly important in my own research. As someone born into the Net Generation, and considered a digital native, I have a native insight into Web 2.0 and its users. Interviewing other digital natives is easier, as I am firmly rooted in the culture.

Another study looking at internet culture from a sociological perspective is Eric B. Weiser's article, 'The Functions of Internet Use and Their Social and Psychological Consequences,' (2001) which correlates respondents' social and psychological wellbeing to engagement with social media. Weiser found that although there is evidence that people who spend large amounts of time on the internet may spend less time with others in real life, the anonymity of the internet allows the marginalised to find support and identification with similar groups online, thereby increasing their psychological wellbeing. This results in a positive effect for many people.

These results were also mentioned in John A. Bargh's and Katelyn Y. A. McKenna's 2004 article, 'The Internet and Social Life.' Although they did not

[153] Ibid., 2.
[154] Ibid, 6.

perform primary research, through an examination of previous studies, they concluded that:

> Despite part media headlines to the contrary, the Internet does not make its users depressed or lonely, and it does not seem to be a threat to community life – quite the opposite, in fact. If anything, the Internet, mainly through e-mail, has facilitated communication and thus close ties between family and friends, especially those too far away to visit in person on a regular basis. The Internet can be a fertile territory for the formation of new relationships as well, especially those based on shared values and interests as opposed to attractiveness and physical appearance as is the norm in the offline world.[155]

There are conflicting opinions as to whether or not the internet correlates with positive social interaction. As the integration of internet culture moves up from the younger generations, to be adopted by the older, or as these youths age, it will become more obvious that the internet is, indeed, a tool for social interaction. My interviews will establish that contemporary youth are well versed in the social protocol of online and offline relationships, without their making a distinction between them. The invisibility of the internet does not create a distinction between the two worlds; they are one and the same.

The next section will discuss the results of my research, in respect to the social nature of the internet: what people are using the internet for, where they are using it, and the pervasiveness of social networking sites and instant messenger services amongst contemporary youth.

Results

Considering first the internet and everyday life, a section of the survey explored how often respondents participate in a variety of activities online. Without taking into account generational difference, Table 31 shows the survey questions and their respective mean frequencies, in descending order. It is interesting to note the low mean frequency for playing online video games (m=2.01). This helps demonstrate the crucial shift that has occurred within Web 2.0, from the internet as an arena for hackers and gamers, to a communicative and social medium. In general, people are using the internet at home (m=4.70), to lookup information (m=4.6), and send emails (m=4.63). The results show that these respondents do not use the internet in public spaces (m=1.97), or libraries (m=2.18) very often. These results are reflective of

[155] John A. Bargh and Katelyn Y.A. McKenna, 'The Internet and Social Life,' *Annual Review of Psychology* 55 (2004): 586.

previous studies examining the general use of the internet[156], but fall short by not taking into account age differences, which I have argued is too important a factor to ignore. General trends are useful to a certain extent, in regards to internet activities but, statistically, the differences between groups is quantitatively too large. For example, in regards to differences in location of internet use, responses would hypothetically vary quite significantly between different generations, as youth would be more likely to use the internet in a library situation, while with older respondents would be more likely to use it during working hours. It could also be hypothesized that youth would be more likely to use instant messenger and social networking sites, as they have more free time, as well as being concerned with creating and maintaining relationships they form during school hours, while older respondents may have more established relationships and connections, which do not require constant contact, and are more likely to spend their free time away from the internet. These questions will be addressed through interview and ANOVA results.

[156] Bakardijeva and Smith, 'The Internet in Everyday Life.'

Table 31: Survey Responses: Internet Activities

Activity	N	Mean
Use the internet at home	1188	4.701178
Use the internet to lookup information	1187	4.673968
Use email	1187	4.642797
Use encyclopaedic sites, such as Wikipedia	1187	4.179444
Read online news	1185	3.884388
Watch videos on youtube	1188	3.677609
Use social networking sites, like Facebook or MySpace	1188	3.665825
Use the internet at work	1180	3.625424
Use online messenger, such as MSN	1188	3.31734
Download singles (music)	1220	3.289344
Read online forums	1186	3.287521
Download music from legal sources	1220	3.027049
Download albums (music)	1221	2.870598
Watch videos on sites other than youtube	1188	2.808081
Download music from illegal sources	1217	2.652424
Participate in online forums	1186	2.632378
Watch tv/movies online	1189	2.59714
Use the internet in the library	1187	2.177759
Play video games online	1188	2.066498
Use the internet in a public space	1189	1.973087

When the results are split between those above the age of 30, and those below, the results become much more indicative of the importance of generational differences.

Table 32: Survey Responses: Generations / Internet Activities

	Activity	N	Mean
Digital Natives	Use the internet at home	752	4.69016
	Use the internet to lookup information	751	4.604527
	Use email	751	4.516644
	Use encyclopaedic sites like Wikipedia	751	4.163782
	Use social networking sites, like Facebook or Myspace	752	4.087766
	Watch videos on youtube	752	3.848404
	Use instant messenger, such as MSN	752	3.742021
	Read news online	749	3.712951
	Download singles (music)	777	3.43758
	Use the internet at work	744	3.209677
	Read online forums	750	3.132
	Download music from legal sources	776	2.956186
	Download album (music)	778	2.930591
	Watch videos on non-youtube sites	752	2.87234
	Download muisc from illegal sources	773	2.843467
	Watch tv/movies onlin	753	2.826029
	Participate in online forums	750	2.516
	Use the internet at the library	751	2.36751
	Play video games online	752	2.246011
	Use the internet in a public space	753	2.015936
Digital Immigrants	Use email	436	4.860092
	Use the internet to lookup information	436	4.793578
	Use the internet at home	436	4.720183
	Use the internet at work	436	4.334862
	Use encyclopeadic sites, such as Wikipedia	436	4.206422
	Read news online	436	4.178899
	Read online forums	436	3.555046
	Watch videos on youtube	436	3.383028
	Download music from legal sources	444	3.150901
	Download singles (music)	443	3.029345
	Use social networking sites, like Facebook or Myspace	436	2.938073
	Participate in online forums	436	2.832569
	Download albums (music)	443	2.765237
	Watch videos on non-youtubes sites	436	2.697248
	Use instant messenger, like MSN	436	2.584862
	Download music from illegal sources	444	2.31982
	Watch tv/movies online	436	2.201835
	Use the internet in public space	436	1.899083

These results indicate that the younger generation is much more involved in the communicative and social aspects of Web 2.0 than their older counterparts. Activities, such as using social networking sites (digital natives m=4.09, digital

immigrants m=2.94), instant messenger (digital natives m=3.74, digital immigrants m=2.58), and watching videos on YouTube (digital natives m=3.85, digital immigrants m=2.70), report statistically higher frequencies of use by youth. Besides using email, the predominant activity for the older generation is linked to the acquisition of information (digital natives m=4.60, digital immigrants m=4.79). Another generational distinction is that younger users are more active in the participatory nature of Web 2.0, whereas the older generations maintain the transmission-focused culture prevalent to baby boomers. As noted previously, the baby boomer generation was focused on the advent and dissemination of television culture, an entirely transmission-focused technology, whereas the Web 2.0 and internet culture promote participation. Even television viewing within internet culture promotes this participation, with a large influx of reality-based TV shows, which give us a glimpse into the lives of others and a sense of kinship. Hugely popular TV shows, such as *X Factor*, *American Idol*, *America's Best Dance Crew*, and a multitude of others, focus on audience participation to drive their show. Voting to keep acts in or out gives the audience a sense of being part of the show and in control of its outcome. It is also reminiscent of the democratisation of fame that is seemingly achievable through YouTube, which has the ability to provide anyone with the possibility of fifteen minutes of online fame. Whether or not that fame is based on merit or talent is entirely debatable.

This participatory television watching style allows digital immigrants to combine transmission-based technology culture with Web 2.0 sensibilities. Without falling into the trap of technological determinism, I argue that qualities associated with a generation can be correlated to the technology which prevailed during their development. For baby boomers, television was an important technological advancement and, as a transmission-based device, encouraged passive watching. Contrast this with the Web 2.0 of the Net generation, which is participation-based and could, possibly, change the way this generation defines itself, and its sociability towards a more participatory sentiment.

Returning to issues of generational differences in everyday internet use, while these results show a lot of overlap in what people are doing online, in general, an ANOVA test between the groups demonstrates significant differences in regards to

how often people are actually engaged in each activity. Table 33 shows the responses that were significantly in favour of the older generation.

Table 33: ANOVA Results: Internet Activities (in favour of older generation)

Activity	Sig.
Use internet at work	7.12E-30
Use email	2.16E-14
Read news online	1.19E-09
Read online forums	1.12E-07
Use the internet to look up information	2.67E-06
Participate in online forums	0.000166
Download music form legal sources	0.019486

As demonstrated in Table 33, an ANOVA test shows that the older generations are statistically more likely to engage in the following internet activities:

1. Use internet at work (Sig.= 7.12E-30)
2. Use email (Sig.= 2.16E-14)
3. Read news online (Sig.= 1.19E-09)
4. Read online forums (Sig.= 1.12E-07)
5. Use the internet to lookup information (Sig.= 2.67E-06)
6. Participate in online forums (Sig.= 0.000166)
7. Download music from legal sources (Sig.= 0.0195)

These results demonstrate that the older generations are not so much involved with participatory activities as the youths are, but are more involved with transferring previous tasks online. While they are moderately involved in Web 2.0 activities, for the most part, they are using the internet to make their lives easier with the immediacy and easy-to-use functionality of the internet. While the older generations use the internet at work statistically more often than the younger generation (Sig.= 7.12E-30), it is unknown whether they are using the internet for work related purposes or social/communicative ones. Both generations show substantial home use on the internet.

The interview results mirrored these sentiments. Respondents were asked to react to the statement: *The internet is a great opportunity for social purposes. Its anonymity allows me to explore aspects of my identity not available in my 'real life'*, which allowed people to reflect on the social aspects of the internet or describe what they do on the internet, in general. A clear sense emerged from the older generation

that the internet is for keeping in contact with friends and family, but not as a way to actively create relationships. They could understand the relevance of social networking sites, but did not feel the need to use them on a regular basis. Emailing, a transference from writing letters/calling, was a suitable forum for maintaining contact and fulfilling their communicative needs.

One respondent, a 62-year-old male from just outside Chicago, Illinois, USA, acknowledged that he only used the internet for the transference of skills, as it is quick and easy. In his words:

> I use the internet for work, overtrading my personal stock accounts, to replace over-the-air radio, to replace phone calls & letters. I also check out upcoming concerts, buy products as I would from catalogs, use the internet for essential & non-essential research (who was on the roster of the 1951 NY Giant baseball team or is Wende Wage or Steve Raines dead or alive) & use it to help plan my camping vacations.

Other responses which demonstrated a desire to keep in contact with others via email included:

> **Female/35/California, USA:** I use the internet mainly to keep in touch with friends and family – myspace, Facebook, email.

> **Male/30/Edinburgh, UK:** I try not to use the internet for socialising (eg meeting new people) that much, but I use e-mails and skype a lot for keeping up with relatives and friends.

> **Male/48/West Midlands, UK:** I don't use the internet for social purposes, apart from email to communicate with friends. I use it to source information, for which it is a great tool. I'm not sure it's really that anonymous anyways.

As noted by the 48-year-old male from the West Midlands, information gathering is also a key component of internet activity by respondents above the age of 30. An example comes from a 39-year-old male from the United States:

> This isn't really important to me. I use the internet for information, only intermittently for social purposes.

Another example of transference, 'research' was also cited quite often:

> **Female/41/Sechelt, Canada**: …I do not use the internet for social purposes, such as using blogs or chat sites. I use the internet mostly for research and purchasing supplies online. I get to research what I want to first then use a second resource to compare between companies allowing me to use a better bargaining chip when purchasing. I do use the internet to communicate with friends via e-mail but there is no anonymity as I already know the person I am

responding to or contacting. A small facet that would be considered as a social purpose is where I respond to my customers who have inquiries from my website. I get to put on my "professional" face and give them the best answer or solution I can. There are always times I would rather respond – "How stupid are you?" to some of the silly questions I am asked.

Male/57/San Jose, USA: I use the net for research for start up companies and not for personal or social aspects.

On the other hand, youth are more likely to pursue participatory, social networking and music related activities that are incorporated into Web 2.0. Table 34 shows responses which were statistically rated higher in those under the age of 30.

Table 34: ANOVA Results: Internet Activities (in favour of younger generation)

Activities	Sig.
Use social networking sites, like Facebook or MySpace	7.26E-42
Use an online messenger service, like MSN or google chat	1.56E-37
Watch TV/movies online	4.58E-15
Watch videos on youtube	5.21E-13
Use internet at a library	1.60E-11
Play video games online	8.2E-11
Download music from illegal sources	3.52E-09
If you download music, how often do you download single tracks	5.84E-07
Watch videos on sites other than youtube	0.01513

Statistically, the younger generations are much more likely, than those above 30, to:

1. Use social networking sites, like Facebook or MySpace
2. Use online messenger services, like MSN
3. Watch tv/movies online
4. Use internet at the library
5. Watch videos on Youtube
6. Play video games online
7. Download music from illegal sources

The use of social networking sites and online messenger services is undeniably an activity of youth. As these are relatively new technologies, it will be interesting to see if the generational differences fade, or if these youth will abandon the

technologies as they age. As the digital society matures, will it move past Facebook, MSN, and Twitter, or will it incorporate these technologies into daily norms?

As of now, social networking sites have become much too ingrained into modern society for anyone to imagine a landscape without them. That is not to say that Facebook or Twitter will not fall out of favour, as have previous sites, but I would argue that social networking sites, in some form, will continue to be important aspects of sociability and internet use. We are social beings, so we will constantly strive for ways to connect with one another, in order to remain in perpetual contact.

This was observed in interviews with the under 30 group. When asked whether they used the internet for social purposes, the responses were overwhelmingly in the affirmative. This was in contrast to the older respondents, whose answers were generally related to transferring offline skills to their online counterparts; digital youth make friends online, find romantic partners, keep up with friends who may have moved away, keep in touch with family, and chat via instant messenger to friends that they may, or may not have contact with on a regular basis in 'real life.' There is no separation between the 'real' and the 'online,' as these youth find no distinction between them. The invisibility of the technology dictates that these 'lives' are one in the same.

For those who mainly use the internet to 'keep up' with others, answers included:

> **Female/26/Prince George, Canada:** Yes, the internet is great for social things like blogs (I like having the choice to be either anonymous or not), finding new music, using Facebook to keep up with old and new friends and their lives, and communicating my own experience.

> **Male/28/Madrid**: Living abroad means I use the internet far more for social purposes than I otherwise would.

> **Female/28/Moncton, Canada**: I use Facebook to snoop on friends (find out what they are doing, what they look like now, who they are spending their time with and how they are spending it, etc.) I check email to stay in touch slightly with friends, but I mostly use Facebook.

While many others were more abstract in their responses, mentioning how they enjoyed the social aspects of the internet:

> **Male/29/Edinburgh, UK**: Agree the net is great socially.

> **Female/27/Abbostford, Canada:** I believe that it is true that the internet is a great opportunity for social purposes. I use it to network with friends in faraway places, for researching things, and for paying bills.

The younger the respondent, more often the use of MSN was cited as a major internet activity:

> **Male/17/Melbourne, Australia:** Yes the net is a great opportunity for social purposes. Just about every night I talk to mates on MSN and through MySpace and Facebook.

> **Female/19/Missouri, USA**: I would tend to agree with that. I have a LiveJournal account, where I write about things that I feel, but I don't necessarily want my friends and family to know. I don't want them to see me when I'm down or sad, so I pretend to be happy around them, and then I write about it on my LiveJournal… I think the internet is a great way for people to vent and also to make new friends.

> **Female/14/Melbourne, Australia:** I generally only use the internet for my friends and to look up new music.

An appreciation of social anonymity was also shared by a 16 year old male living in a rural, northern Canadian town, where opportunities to explore personal interests may not always be available:

> I definitely would agree with this. I really like folk music and recently I bought a banjo, but here in our little town there's no one who teaches it. So I found myself a couple websites and now I can learn from a guy in Ontario or Istanbul, who knows where he lives.

The only respondent under the age of 30 who reported not using the internet for social purposes was a 24 year old male from Texas:

> I prefer real life. I use the internet for many things, but escapism isn't really one of them. Unless you count video games.

He was also the only respondent to make the distinction that his 'real life' is different from a perceived 'online' self.

Attitudes towards the social uses of the internet

Dividing the dataset between those above the age of 30, and those below, and defining characteristics between the groups based on their use of technology, could be contentious. Ascribing a list of sentiments and activities to a group, because of technological involvement, would no doubt fall into technological determinism but, interestingly, the interview results showed a distinct demographic pattern in regards

to sociability and the internet. This was especially evident as it relates to involvement with social networking sites.

As noted previously, the survey data reported a substantial significant difference between those about the age of 30 and those below, and their participation levels with social networking sites. They were clearly seen as the domain of the digital youth. The interviews further solidified the generational difference in use of social networking sites. High school respondents, in particular, overwhelmingly reported using Facebook and Bebo on a regular basis. They often felt that if they did not use SNS (social networking sites), they would be 'out of the loop' and not aware of what was happening in their immediate social circle. SNS were where friendships were solidified, through common interests, constant communication, and shared gossip. SNS are essentially an integral part of high school culture, without which social inclusion is limited; SNS have become a necessary tool for social interaction amongst youth. Most find it easier to make friends with people online, as it is easier to communicate through text than in person. A model of friendship acquisition through SNS has been developed by youth. Situations unfold whereby one meets someone in person, then 'friends' them on Facebook, allowing each person to see the other's 'page,' which can include photos and information, such as hobbies, schools attended, occupation, political and personal affiliations, religious beliefs, who they are friends with, groups they belong to, etc. This information then provides fodder for conversation, often through mutual interests. Once it has passed beyond a superficial level, either person can then invite their friend to events, post greetings on their 'wall' or privately through email-type programs, and chat in real-time with the 'chat' feature. This typology was summed up quite adequately by one 14 year old female high school student when she noted:

> Like, say me and Barry didn't speak lots [at school] and I added him on Bebo, and maybe we'd start leaving each other comments, and then we'd start talking more. Then, like, it sorta just helps people start friends and chatting more…Like, I suppose it's easier to talk to someone over the internet than it is to go up to their face and go "Oh, Hi! By the way, I'm such and such. Do you want to start talking to me?"

Social networking sites provide an integral way in which people can create and define friendships. New social taboos and protocol have developed surrounding

the nature of 'Facebook-friends' – the appropriate situation in which to 'friend' someone and whether or not to de-friend, should someone not follow the appropriate code. More research needs to be conducted on these social taboos, in order to provide useful information on how friendships are formed and maintained in contemporary, digital society.

While youth readily accept this typology of friendship creation/maintenance, this is in stark contrast to how those above the age of 30 perceive the use of social networking sites. The interview results show that, in general, older respondents are aware of the social potential of SNS, but are somewhat wary of their presence and use. A few use and enjoy using SNS but, on the whole, they remain the domain of youth.

A few older respondents noted that they see the social potential of social networking sites, but more for their children:

> **Female/54/Goteborg, Sweden**: I don't do that, but some of my kids do, and I think it's definitely an asset with the net – if I had the time and felt the need I would go for it and I think it's nice that the possibility is there, even if I don't use it.

> **Male/47/St. Catherines, Canada:** No doubt the internet is a great opportunity for social purposes, but I don't use it that way. My 16 year old daughter certainly does. I do spend a lot of time on email, especially keeping in contact with friends who live far away, but the internet itself I don't use for social purposes.

> **Male/38/Siuntio, Finland:** it's no greater opportunity for social purposes than any other media. maybe 20 years ago i might have played with that toy more – now i'd rather play with legos with my children

While others were just sceptical about social networking sites, in general:

> **Male/36/London, UK**: I think that in general, it probably is a good social opportunity. But, personally speaking, it's not really a side of the internet that I explore: I don't have any quote-unquote personal web pages (MySpace, Facebook, etc) and haven't posted on an internet messageboard for ten years. And, to be honest, your statement just makes me think of those creepy old men who masquerade as teenage boys in internet chatrooms.

> **Female/35/Pennsylvania, USA:** I would not agree that the internet is good for social purposes, except for the social networking sites like Facebook and My Space. In fact, the internet allows people to be anti-social and withdraw from human, personal interaction. I would say that the internet is helpful in getting

> information and giving humans a place to dialogue, especially with people who are mile away from one another.

***

Clearly the internet is a tool for communication. While the digital natives are *more* likely to take advantage of the social tools such as social networking sites, other communication devices, such as email, have become indispensable for all. A large part of the appeal of social networking sites, especially amongst youth, is the ease with which people can communicate online. Referred to as the 'online disinhibition effect,' people find it much easier to open up and express themselves via the medium of text, both online, as well as through other mobile sources, such as cell phones.

2.2: THE ONLINE DISINHIBITION EFFECT

The online disinhibition effect is, in general terms, the increased ease of communication granted through computer- (or text-) based communication. Research within the field of psychology has found that people self-disclose personal information, via text and computer-mediated conversation, more readily than in face-to-face conversation.[157]

Joinson, in particular, has conducted numerous studies examining self-disclosure within CMC (computer-mediated communication), including the notable 2001 study, 'Self disclosure in computer-mediated communication: The role of self-awareness and visual anonymity.' Through a series of three studies, comparing conversations between dyads in face-to-face communication, text-based chats, text-based with a visual of their partner, or text-based while also watching a television program, Joinson concluded that anonymity aids spontaneous disclosure of personal information, more so than in face-to-face conversations. This held true for both those who knew they were going to meet their conversation partner at some time in the future, as well as those who knew they would not. As noted by Joinson,

> Anonymity of others to the self (i.e. visual anonymity) leads to heightened self-awareness, and thus to greater adherence to group norms when a social identity is salient. On the other hand, anonymity of the self to others (i.e. lack of identifiability allows "one to express one's true mind, or authentic self, unfettered by concerns of self-presentation" (Spears & Lea, 1994, p.430), and might lead to a reduction in conformity to group norms.[158]

Of interest, in relation to the function of social networking sites and the creation of social relationships, Joinson and others[159] have found that computer-

[157] A.N. Joinson, 'Self-Disclosure in computer-mediated communication: The role of self-awareness and visual anonymity,' *European Journal of Social Psychology* 31.2 (2001): 177-192; A.N. Joinson, 'Causes and implications of disinhibited behavior on the Internet' in *Psychology and the Internet*, ed. J. Gackenbach (San Diego: Academia Press, 1998): 43-60; J. Walther, 'Computer-mediated communication: impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction,' *Communication Research* 23 (1996): 3-43; Sara Kiesler, Jane Siegel, and Timothy McGuire, 'Social psychological aspects of computer-mediated communication,' *American Psychologist* 39.10 (1984): 1123-1134; M. Parks and J. Floyd, 'Making Friends in Cyperspace,' *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 1.4 (1996).
[158] Joinson, 'Self-Disclosure in computer-mediated communication,' 180.
[159] Joseph B. Walther, Jeffrey F. Anderson and David W. Park, 'Interpersonal Effects in Computer-Mediated Interaction: A Meta-Analysis of Social and Antisocial Communication,' *Communication Research* 21.4 (1994): 460-487.

mediated communications actually culminate in *more social*[160] conversations than face-to-face interaction. Through the inherent anonymity afforded by text, and the disinhibition effect, people can often feel a stronger bond with their communication partners. Joinson concludes that his study:

> Suggests that self disclosure, because of its role in relationship development, may be important to understanding the development of social relationships on-line. Moreover, Study One goes some way to validating Internet users' self-reports of high levels of self-disclosure during CMC-based relationships (Parks & Floyd, 1996), and supports Walther's notion of CMC as being more "social" than face-to-face interaction.[161]

While it is unclear who coined the term, 'online disinhibition effect,' John Suler's 2004 article, 'The Online Disinhibition Effect' is widely regarded as the phenomenon's primary text. Suler notes that the disinhibition effect operates on a spectrum between toxic and benign disinhibition[162]. Benign disinhibition occurs when 'people share very personal things about themselves. They reveal secret emotions, fears, wishes. They show unusual acts of kindness and generosity, sometimes going out of their way to help others'[163]. With toxic disinhibition, 'we witness rude language, harsh criticisms, anger, hatred, even threats. Or people visit the dark underworld of the Internet – places of pornography, crime, and violence – territory they would never explore in the real world'[164]. Of course, as Suler notes, there is a complex relationship between toxic and benign disinhibition, but I feel these terms imply strong value judgments, which do not encompass the interrelationships that can occur along the spectrum: are all 'toxic' activities negative and harmful, and all 'benign' activities positive, as the terms imply? This will vary widely, depending on the persons involved in the online communication. The social appropriateness of online communication is largely based on what the user brings to the relationship. While they may feel an increased ease of communication, they still remain *themselves*. Online communication and exploration

[160] In the sense that people feel freer to disclose personal information, creating a tighter bond between them.
[161] Joinson, 'Self-Disclosure in computer-mediated communication,' 188.
[162] John Suler, 'The Online Disinhibition Effect,' *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 7.3 (2004): 321.
[163] Ibid., 321.
[164] Ibid., 321.

of self does not change one's personality, but may encourage one to explore certain aspects of their identity not socially acceptable offline.

Suler describes six contributing factors which influence one's participation in the disinhibition effect, which this chapter will explore: disassociative anonymity; invisibility; asynchronicity; solipsistic introjection; disassociative imagination; and minimization of status and authority.

(1) **Disassociative anonymity** occurs because people can choose, to a certain extent, how they want to be perceived online, and can maintain a degree of anonymity through what they choose not to publish. 'When people have the opportunity to separate their actions online from their in-person lifestyle and identity, they feel less vulnerable about self-disclosing and acting out. Whatever they say or do can't de directly linked to the rest of their lives…The online self becomes a compartmentalized self'[165].

While I agree with Suler, that people may behave differently if their actions cannot be traced to their offline selves, it seems this has become less and less relevant to the mainstream user. It is often more desirable to present yourself as your 'true self'. There are those who allow themselves to be presented in whatever fashion, despite how they may be perceived by others, whereas others are very concerned about their personae, and go to great lengths to control their published self. Tapscott deals with these issues in *Grown Up Digital*; for him, how people choose to portray themselves online is generationally situated. Tapscott argues that the Net Generation is much freer with what they allow to be posted about themselves, to the extent that it 'astounds parents'[166]. In Tapscott's words:

> The Net Generation is opening up to a degree that astounds their parents. Many Facebook enthusiasts post any scrap of information they have about themselves and others online, for all their friends to see – from digital displays of affection to revealing pictures. Most are not motivated by malice; they simply want to share what they consider happy or fun events with others. Net Geners clearly don't understand why privacy is important.[167]

As with many Net Geners, I would align my views on privacy and social networking sites in stark contrast to Tapscott. While there will always be those who post private

[165] Ibid., 322.
[166] Tapscott, *Grown up Digital*, 65.
[167] Tapscott, *Grown up Digital*, 65-66.

and potentially discriminating information of themselves online, the Net Generation has the knowledge and understanding of how to alter their security/privacy settings in ways that digital immigrants might not. Without being as internet savvy, many digital immigrants may inadvertently leave more open to the public than they realise. Although it is an unfortunate reality, there are Net Geners who post discriminating or controversial thoughts and photos of themselves to the wider internet public, without fully comprehending the consequences of their actions.

Returning to Suler's article, the second contributing factor to the disinhibition effect is (2) **Invisibility**. Here, people are physically invisible from those they are communicating with. The lack of visible body language allows for exploration of one's sense of self, in a natural way, without fear of retribution or harassment. As Suler notes:

> Even with everyone's identity known, the opportunity to be physically invisible amplifies the disinhibition effect. People don't have to worry about how they look or sound when they type a message. They don't have to worry about how others look or sound in response to what they say…In everyday relationships, people sometimes avert their eyes when discussing something personal and emotional. Avoiding eye contact and face-to-face visibility disinhibits people. Text communication offers a built-in opportunity to keep one's eyes averted.[168]

This disinhibition effect can also be extrapolated to texting on mobile phones, which has become a massive phenomenon, and accepted as a legitimate form of communication. There is no need for immediate response, as people have time to assess their thoughts. This lack of immediacy is also a central feature of some forms of online communication, such as email. Suler refers to this as (3) **Asynchronicity.**

The time-lapse in responding gives people the feeling that they are sending their thoughts and responses 'out there,' to a void where responsibilities and reactions can be limited. One can carefully craft an email message, as opposed to spontaneous conversation, with its flaws and accidental revealing of potentially embarrassing or damaging information. Conversations need not be experienced in real time, which appears counterintuitive to the desire for constant contact, especially amongst digital natives. Online messenger services, on the other hand, provide real-time communication with a sense of physical invisibility, but the loss of

[168] Sular, 'The Online Disinhibition Effect,' 322.

asynchronicity. The disinhibition effect remains, but without body language and tone of voice, there are often misunderstandings due to over-reading for meanings not necessarily present in the conversation, and reading from our own perspective and lived experiences.

The Net Generation has developed ways of dealing with asynchronicity and the loss of body language – text-speak, and emoticons give emotional cues. Emoticons, in particular, give a sense of the speaker's mood and the tone in which his/her words *should* be read. For example, a sarcastic comment without the presence of a winking emoticon[169] could be perceived as entirely serious by the message receiver. In text-speak, one of the most widely used acronyms, LOL, has become so overused, with multiple meanings, that it is almost a parody of itself. Originally used to convey that someone is 'laughing out loud', LOL has become a filler word, such as 'umm' and the ever popular 'like' that are used by youth when speaking. As with language, text-speak, which has had 20 years to develop, is evolving, especially in relaying emotions. In an effort to humanise non-verbal binary code communication, we will continue to explore ways to share our feelings and make connections.

The use of emoticons leads to Suler's next factor for the disinhibition effect, (4) **Solipsistic Introjection,** in which people inject a voice, often imagined, where the reader assumes to know how the 'speaker' would actually speak in real life. Although not mentioned in Suler's article, emoticons have an influence on how the 'voice' of the author is perceived, as they provide clues to the *actual,* or intended meaning. In Suler's words:

> Absent face-to-face cues combined with text communication can alter self-boundaries. People may feel that their mind has merged with the mind of the online companion. Reading another person's message might be experienced as a voice within one's head, as if that person's psychological presence and influence have been assimilated or introjected into one's psyche.[170]

As Suler notes, this effect is not new, but has received a new component with online communication. His definition of solipsistic introjection is not unlike the conversation one carries on in one's head with people one may already know, rehearsing conversations before they happen, fantasising about ideal outcomes to

[169] ;)
[170] Ibid., 323.

confrontations, etc. The brain provides a safe haven for imaginary conversations, which, when used for text-based conversation, translates into online disinhibition. 'For some people, talking with oneself may feel like confronting oneself, which may unleash many powerful psychological issues'[171].

Suler's fifth descriptive, (5) **disassociative imagination**, is related to solipsistic introjection. Just as one creates imaginary voices for those they communicate with online, one may attach characters or personas to these voices, which may or may not be accurate. Some people may see their online self as a game version of their offline selves, one in which the rules of reality do not apply, with no real consequences for actions. Unfortunately, this can lead people to disclosing too much information, as they do not realise how readily this information is available, or could potentially be used against them. These types of people, 'once they turn off the computer and return to their daily routine, they believe they can leave behind that game and their game-identity. They relinquish their responsibilities for what happens in a make-believe play world that has nothing to do with reality'[172]. What they do not realise is that the internet is no game, and the consequences can be just as devastating as those in the offline world. This notion could have its roots in the anonymous, role-playing games, such as those used by the respondents in Turkle's *Life on the Screen,* in which people create characters to interact in imaginary worlds. For online role-players, much of their internet use *is* the game; one where reality and imagination become indistinguishable. Imaginary role playing games, though, are not immune from real world consequences, such as 'Second Life,' in which the online world is based on 'real life' situations, translated into an online environment. In one case, a woman had a simulated affair with her husband in the online role-playing game. Her husband considered this to be a real case of adultery and they ultimately divorced[173]. Where do we draw the lines between online and offline worlds? Even though physical touch is not achievable online, the emotional connection between people can be real, as well as the ensuing consequences.

[171] Ibid., 323.
[172] Ibid., 323.
[173] Steven Morris, 'Second Life affair leads to real life divorce,' *guardian.co.uk*, November 13, 2008, http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/nov/13/second-life-divorce.

Suler's last component of the online disinhibition effect is (6) the **Minimization of Status and Authority**. The impact of authority figures, whether or not one knows the other person's status, is lessened within the disinhibition effect. The internet provides a levelled playing field for anyone's voice to be heard, without fear of retribution from authority figures. In Suler's words:

> The traditional Internet philosophy holds that everyone is an equal, that the purpose of the net is to share ideas and resources among peers. The net itself is designed with no centralized control, and as it grows, with seemingly no end to its potential for creating new environments, many of its inhabitants see themselves as innovative, independent-minded explorers and pioneers. This atmosphere and this philosophy contribute to the minimizing of authority.[174]

This loss of authority is akin to the loss of the expert, something which is discussed extensively by Andrew Keen in his book *The Cult of the Amateur*. Keen notes that sites, such as Wikipedia, which draws its information from, and is edited by the masses, as opposed to 'experts' in a field, is creating a culture in which we each think of ourselves as an expert authority. The issue arises of whether or not that information is valid. It is important merely to note how this loss of authority affects the online disinhibition effect. Without fear of retribution, people are more likely to post their thoughts or feelings on a subject; whether they have any relevance or meaning is immaterial, just the fact that the opportunity exists and it is being used, are major contributors to the online disinhibition effect.

While Suler's factors of the disinhibition effect are diverse and cover multiple aspects of people's online experiences, individual differences and predispositions will also affect how people participate online. As Suler argues, more research needs to be conducted on the affect of personality and online communication styles. Suler questions whether people closer to their 'true selves' online? Or are online identities extensions of offline ones? This will be discussed further in Chapter 2.3 but, for now, it is important to note that all expressions of self are, nonetheless, one's 'self'. The online disinhibition effect is not bringing forth an alternate form of one's identity, but merely displaying another facet of it – no more or less 'real' than anything portrayed offline:

[174] Suler, 'The Online Disinhibition Effect,' 324.

> The self does not exist separate from the environment in which that self is expressed. If someone contains his aggression in face-to-face living, but expresses that aggression online, both behaviours reflect aspects of self: the self that acts non-aggressively under certain conditions, the self that acts aggressively under other conditions. When a person is shy in person while outgoing in nature online, neither self-presentation is more true. They are two dimensions of that person, each revealed within a different situational context. Sometimes, as Jung noted, these different sides of the person operate in dynamic polarity relative to each other. They are two sides of the same personality dimension.[175]

According to psychologists, such as Joinson and Suler, the primary factor for the online disinhibition effect, and the amount and quality of self-disclosure that occurs online, is ultimately anonymity. People feel more comfortable disclosing information about themselves, often quite personal, or expressing their views. Anonymity provides a safe haven where consequences seem inconsequential, and almost irrelevant in the game-state that many perceive the internet to be. A change has been occurring over the past few years, however, where these consequences are becoming increasingly relevant, as online and offline worlds are increasingly integrated. For example, YouTube videos often appear on mainstream news releases. As the crossover becomes more encompassing, digital natives and immigrants will become less defined.

New research will have to be conducted on how social networking sites, and new online communication devices, are contributing to the disinhibition effect. Anonymity appears to be becoming less relevant, even less desirable, especially with widely popular networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace, where people have access to photos, videos, personal blogs and information. While people often know the person with whom they are communicating, they can also meet others, or re-ignite friendships which have fallen away. Interviews conducted with digital natives, for the present research, have indicated a strong preference for computer-mediated communication, especially instant messaging. Youth noted the ease with which they can communicate via text as opposed to face-to-face, and often indicated that without social networking sites, their friendship base would not be as large or as strong if purely through face-to-face interactions.

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[175] Ibid,. 325.

With the present research, while none of the interview questions dealt directly with the issue of the disinhibition effect, many respondents demonstrated views within its parameters, in response to the statement: *The internet is a great opportunity for social purposes. Its anonymity allows me to explore aspects of my identity not available in 'real life.'* Respondents were generally divided over whether they considered the anonymity afforded by the internet culminated in positive or negative outcomes. When talking about their personal experiences, however, respondents generally felt that the internet's sense of anonymity, as well as text-based communication, whether anonymous or not, promoted positive encounters and an ease of communication not readily available in face-to-face conversations.

The responses can be divided into three main categories: (1) those who felt the internet allowed for ease of communication and for the experiences to be positive; (2) those who felt there were fewer consequences online and, (3) those who felt that the anonymity of online communication encouraged negative behaviour. Because people were not asked directly about online disinhibition, these responses represent what respondents disclosed spontaneously about the subject: opinions which they felt strongly about in regards to their use of the internet, and how the online actions of others affected their experiences. We cannot deny the validity of their experiences and, as such, they are relevant to a discussion of the online disinhibition effect.

For those respondents who felt that computer-mediated communication positively impacted the formation and maintenance of personal relationships, there was a general sense that people felt they could open up to others more willingly, and become closer online than when meeting in real life. Some respondents noted that they had a circle of online friends with whom they may or may not ever meet in real life, but who were no less valuable than those with whom they had face to face friendships. A 27 year-old female from Montreal, Canada, for example, notes that 'Well, I do agree that the internet is a great opportunity for social purposes, in the sense that it helps me build friendships that would have been difficult to build without it (as I am not really comfortable with the phone).' This was a commonly-held opinion: that the internet fostered ease of communication, especially for those who may be shy in approaching new people. A 16 year old male from Albemarle,

North Carolina, USA also noted that 'it is much easier to meet and talk to people online than it is "out and about." Maybe this is because of the fact that I live in a relatively small town.'

Ease of communication was also cited by the following respondents:

> **Male/23/Winnipeg, Canada:** The anonymity the internet provides does allow for some clandestinity (asking personal questions of others without the need to actually see them face to face/call them is an obvious example) but these are only small advantages. As a social networking tool it can be quite effective, however, allowing for easy planning on events via channels such as facebook.

> **Male/32/Maryland, USA:** I have been involved with the internet since 1994, prior to that I was involved in and operated dial-up bulletin boards. I have always found it easier to communicate via "text" than through speech.

> **Female/24/Sydney, Australia:** There is a brilliant opportunity for not just anonymity, but to redefine yourself online. Personally, I like myself & my relationships a whole lot more online than in reality! IM & social networking doesn't have any awkward pauses, stutters, bad haircuts, pimples (especially when you can pick & choose which photos you publish), and one can be a whole lot more articulate and learned with spellcheck, thesaurus, & pitchfork at your instant disposal.
>
> Although I am a very social & talkative person in "reality" (I use quotation marks because a digital life is absolutely a real life), interacting with people online can be so much easier. One of my best friends is a uni student in Michigan who I've never met, but whom I've spoken to every day for 2 years, & am meeting for the first time in Illinois this year. Without the internet, these types of relationships could never occur. Handwritten letters may provide a physical element & nostalgia, but cannot provide the ease or frequency, & hence depth of communication available digitally.

A 24 year old male from Leicester, UK, however, provided a word of caution about online communication:

> On a side note, I think it's interesting how some people are more intimate with those they know online through specific interests or communities like Second Life than they are with the people they see everyday in real life.

One 43 year old male from New Hamphsire, USA, praised the ease of online communication, 'I have many friends around the country whom I would not know if it weren't for the ease of communication allowed by net access,' but also acknowledged that there could be negative affects due to the online disinhibition effect:

> The anonymity of the net can be a dangerous thing. People feel sage exposing personal information that they would not do to a close confidant. "Memes"

> such as : "Your first pet name and your middle name = your rockstar name" flourish under the guise of anonymity, but anyone familiar with data mining will tell you that people putting these responses on their MySpace, Facebook, LiveJournal, etc pages are exposing information that can be used to abuse their identity. The internet is a wonderful tool – but just like a chainsaw, it must be used with caution. People do not use enough caution.

His point relates to the second category, those who felt that there were no applicable consequences to online actions, because they were not *real*. This premise negates the potential for identity theft or emotional abuse of others. While none of the respondents, when speaking of their own actions, reported engaging in immoral or illegal activities, there were respondents who reported that they did not have to deal with how their offline-friends reacted, which they found appealing:

> **Male/33/Tallil, Iraq**: I can say and do things without fear of offending my "real world" social peers.

> **Male/25/Connecticut, USA:** The anonymity, especially in regards to music, can be a good thing. For example, it lets people explore bands they might not listen to with a group of friends – a "guilty pleasure," so to speak. Also, it offers the opportunity to listen to something without the influence of friends to say what's good/bad.

In contrast to these opinions, however, online anonymity was perceived by others to have the potential for negative actions, without consequence:

> **Male/30/New Jersey, USA:** It's good to have a place to escape to anonymously, but there's as much good as bad in this statement. People conduct themselves on the internet in ways they would never dare in reality, which I think negates any positivity here. All too often the internet is a sounding board without consequences.

> **Male/22/Calgary, Canada:** I do believe that some persons are affected by the anonymity, though. Some that are usually quiet and scared can all of a sudden because arrogant, know-it-all, dickheads; without fear of retribution or retaliation.

The final category were those who commented only on the negative aspects of what anonymity allowed others to partake in online – including amoral, and illegal actions:

> **Male/35/New Zealand:** My own experience is that the "anonymity" is creating problems in society whereby people are able to abandon society's norms of behaviour. For instance, my own uncle (a retired school principal) was convicted for downloading child pornography. Prior to the internet he would not have had such easy access to this sort of material. I do not think that

this presents great opportunities but serves only to exploit the weak and vulnerable.

Female/36/Raleigh, USA: I believe that some people may take advantage of that anonymity for more immoral or illegal purposes to explore aspects that they would not have access to in real life. I regret this has to be part of the internet, but we must take the bad with the good.

Female/56/Burns Lake, Canada: The anonymity of the internet allows people to express their true feelings/natures, often their darker side, the one that is held in check by societal conventions.

***

In general, there seemed to be no substantial difference between how the digital natives and immigrants were affected by the online disinhibition effect. While the younger generation expressed more of a desire, and ease, with communicating via text, there was no age restriction on those who thought online communication has the potential for immoral and illegal activity. While consequences can, indeed, be real, there were those, of all ages, who felt the consequences for online illegal activity were inconsequential.

An important aspect of the online disinhibition effect is its influence on identity formation and publication online. Because people feel more open communicating online, or via text, how does this affect the way in which their identities are portrayed online – either through conversations, or in social networking sites?

2.3: iDENTITY

The online representation and exploration of self online is of concern to most active internet users. Social networking sites, in particular, allow people to publish as much, or as little about their identities, in what seems to be a controlled environment. Blogs and personal homepages allow people to express their opinions, share photos and personal information, and make and maintain friendships.

This section will explore the following issues: anonymity and identity portrayal; how much control does one *really* have on how they are represented online; and is the internet allowing for a fragmentation of identity, akin to the culture of eclecticism evolving in musical tastes, due to digital music availability. It begins with Turkle's work, *Life on the Screen*, which examines the use of identity in anonymous-based MUDs, moves on to others who have built upon her research, and finally to my research on identity formation and fragmentation, as it relates to social networking sites. The online interview results guide this section.

Turkle's *Life on the Screen,* an important discourse in the study of online identity formation, is a natural starting point. As Turkle's research has already been explored in this dissertation (Chapter 2.2), my focus in this section will be concerned with where other research has departed from her arguments and what we can still find relevant today. Turkle's work was centred on the relationship between humans and computers and how the anonymity afforded by some web-based games, allowed people to separate themselves from 'real life,' in order to explore new, or alternate identities,

For Turkle's subjects, anonymity was central to their identity formation, something which has since become less important to the mainstream internet user. There are, of course, still many who take part in role-playing games, with avatars completely removed from their real life identities, but they remain in the minority. The mainstream internet user may dabble in role-playing games, but their primary online identity can be found in social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter. The 1995 role-players were among the first to navigate the relationships between human and computer, and other online humans, who were only known by what was selectively presented. The internet, for Turkle, had 'become a significant social

laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life'[176].

Aspects of the digital identity are the focus of this study, and where Turkle's detractors lose sight of her arguments. While more studies are needed on mainstream users, we must not lose sight of Turkle's argument for the fragmentation of identity, which is still quite relevant today. The fragmentation of identity is very prevalent in the digital age, especially for youth who are involved with social networking sites. Digital youth will frequently have their 'main' profile on a site such as Facebook, post their thoughts on another, such as Twitter, all while browsing the web, and researching on Wikipedia. The negotiation of the human/computer/human relationship is second nature to digital natives, but for many, we are still 'using life on computer screens to become comfortable with new ways of thinking about evolution, relationships, sexuality, politics, and identity'[177].

Another core theme driving Turkle's argument is that, as social beings, we will always desire relationships and social contact, but how this contact is initiated and maintained is adapting to changes in the digital society. She notes that 'we are social beings who seek communication with others,'[178] something which the high use of social networking sites, across the generations, demonstrates. In the 1990s, the distance between people and machines was becoming harder to maintain[179], but that can now be seen between one's online and offline self. That is not to say that there *should* be distance between the two, merely that they are quickly becoming one and the same, a melding of each fragment in the collage that is identity.

Building on the notion of how people create online relationships, in the literal sense, Michael Hardey wrote an interesting article in 2002, based on research into online dating sites, entitled 'Life Beyond the Screen: Embodiment and Identity Through the Internet.' Hardey moves away from the anonymity-focus of Turkle's work, to people who ultimately *want* their identities to be known, for the purpose of developing romantic relationships. Hardey's article is concerned with the

[176] Turkle, *Life on the Screen*, 180.
[177] Ibid., 26.
[178] Ibid., 102.
[179] Ibid., 21.

development of the online relationship, and how people negotiate that into offline relationships. Hardey notes that the drive of his research is:

> To examine how users negotiate the tensions between the development of virtual relationships, and the norms and conventions associated with the "interaction code" of physical copresence. It also serves to illustrate how virtual spaces may be shaped by and grounded in the social, bodily and cultural experiences of users…the paper finally explores the possible consequences of this study for those commentaries on cyberspace, which have variously celebrated the potentialities of the internet and lamented the effects it has on human life.[180]

Through sociological research into those who used online dating sites for potential relationships, Hardey notes that the mainstream internet user has moved past the anonymous domains of the MUD and chat room, towards relationships which are grounded in 'existing social and economic processes'[181]. Dating sites work on the basis of trust, not fantasy and, as such, rely on people being honest and open about themselves. The internet, 'rather than forming a distinct cyberspace culture…is opening up new opportunities to shape the extant contours and contents of social life'[182].

Also moving beyond Turkle's notions of anonymity, Helen Kennedy, in 2006, wrote an article, 'Beyond Anonymity, or Future Directions for Internet Identity Research.' Kennedy argues for shifting the focus of internet studies from identity issues to cultural and social influences in the construction of personal WebPages. She argues that the social aspect of WebPages is often ignored in favour of identity-projection. In a critical examination of her work, in order to avoid a one-sided discussed, we should also consider the identity-projection aspects of WebPages. Both have value – social norms influence identity, and vice versa; we should embrace both for a well-rounded understanding of internet use. What we can, however, take from Kennedy's work, is the notion that anonymity and identity are complex processes, which are context-specific. In her conclusions, she notes that:

> The concept of anonymity is more complex than it seems at first glance – there is a distinction between feeling and being anonymous, and there are degrees of

[180] Michael Hardey 'Life Beyond the screen: embodiment and identity through the internet,' *The Sociological Review* 50.4 (2002): 571.
[181] Ibid., 583.
[182] Ibid., 583.

> anonymity which are varied and situated. Like others, I too have found the terms of identity research limited and problematic.[183]

These are terms which will remain problematic, unfortunately, but it is important, as Kennedy argues, to locate anonymity within identity, to determine why some remain anonymous and others do not, and if their reasons are socially based.

Identity formation and fragmentation are not specific to the internet. People have always acted differently in different social situations; the internet, however, makes this fragmentation more obvious and easier. On and offline identities complement one another, with the potential to delve further into specific interests and relationships:

> As described thus far, identity statements on home pages closely resemble those found in face-to-face interaction. Home pages give and give off impressions that may or may not be related to the intentions of their creators. They can be embedded in and linked to networks or relationships and activities. They can be used to bolster real life communication, can be compared to old-fashioned physical objects, and can invite response and create dialogue. In all these ways they resemble traditional, face-to-face identity statements.[184]

Walker argues that the technology does not *determine* identity formation, but works to *shape* identity statements. It may improve the way people express some aspects of their identity not conducive to face-to-face interactions, but it also 'provides new ambiguities into interaction' and 'further obfuscates our understanding of identity and interaction'[185].

As noted with the online disinhibition effect in Chapter 2.2, anonymity creates an environment in which people feel more open to self-disclose information they might not do so face-to-face. The lack of body language often makes people more open. McKenna, et al. (2002) argue that this is beneficial for those wanting to establish online relationships.[186] Those with social anxieties can utilise the anonymity and online disinhibition effect to their social advantage. Just as people may feel more open talking to those they do not know, or cannot see, the internet

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[183] Helen Kennedy, 'Beyond anonymity, or future directions for internet identity research,' *New Media & Society* 8.6 (December 2006): 872.
[184] Katherine Walker, '"It's Difficult to Hide It": The Presentation of Self on Internet Home Pages,' *Qualitative Sociology* 23.1 (2000): 111.
[185] Ibid., 118.
[186] Katelyn McKenna, Amie Green, and Marci Gleason, 'Relationship Formation on the Internet: What's the Big Attraction?' *Journal of Social Issues* 58.1 (2002): 9-31.

allows them to feel comfortable being themselves. The results of their empirical research demonstrated that those with social anxieties were able to form lasting relationships, two years at the time of study, which then moved from the online arena to face-to-face settings. The internet, for them, was a tool to enhance their daily lives and overcome the anxiety of meeting new people by removing the physical body. Then there are those who do not always want to separate their on and offline selves, but use one to enhance the other. McKenna et al. conclude that individuals use the internet:

> As a means not only of maintaining ties with existing family and friends but also of forming close and meaningful new relationships in a relatively non-threatening environment….the extent that these virtual relationships become incorporated into and thus a part of the individual's identity and "true self," they tend to be brought into the person's traditional, face-to-face, real-life circle of friends and intimates. People, it would seem, want very much to make a reality out of the important aspects of their virtual lives.[187]

Results

In order to explore these issues, the current study asked interview respondents to react to the following statement: *The internet is a great opportunity for social purposes. Its anonymity allows me to explore aspects of my identity not available in my 'real life.'* A variety of answers emerged, from those against social networking sites to those who felt they could not live without them. Some loved the anonymity the internet provides (especially in gaming forum), while others felt their identity being known on the internet was of great importance. In general, the responses can be grouped into three groups, which will be expanded on further: (1) Those who felt there was no separation between their online and offline selves; (2) those who felt that online anonymity was not important; and (3) those who occasionally used the internet anonymously. In addition, we can add a fourth group, (4) those who used the internet to explore facets of their identity and personality not presentable offline.

(1) All life is 'real life'

While this statement yielded a wide variety of responses, the majority felt that there was no distinction between their online and offline selves, as they were one and the same. While previous literature in the field tended to create a distinction between

[187] Ibid., 30.

on- and off-line worlds, the two have become so interconnected, especially with digital natives, that they are almost indistinguishable. There is no need to separate them, because they are, indeed, facets of one's identity. This is not a new phenomenon, either, just a new way of looking at it. Online identities have always been part of one's *identity*, but it is only recently that we have thought of them as being universalised. I use this term loosely, of course, as there remains those on the outer edge of the digital divide but, speaking as a mainstream agent in the digital age, there is clearly no separation between online and off.

Respondents had differing opinions, but most saw the internet as an extension of their everyday life, with no need for anonymity, or a separation of the online and offline selves:

> **Male/24/Leicester, UK:** [the internet] is more like an extension to my everyday life than an alternative arena, since the interests and communities I am involved in aren't ones I wouldn't openly discuss with people I work and live with :P
>
> **Male/36/Edinburgh, UK:** It's an extension of "real life" not an alternative, and as such allows you to develop different parts of your identity or even multiple identities without the immediate consequences of physical space.
>
> **Male/30/Denmark:** I stick to my "real" life social networks online.
>
> **Male/25/Ottawa, Canada:** All the socialising I do on the internet is tied up with my "real life": emails (personal and work related), networking sites like Myspace (for my band), my photo blog, etc.

Some noted, as this 26-year-old female from Washington, DC, that anonymity would be a hindrance:

> It is a social opportunity – but I don't really use it anonymously. Most of my interaction with the web is dependent on me being recognized as myself (signed freelance writing, personal blog, etc).

While some made generalised comments:

> **Male/36/Edinburgh, UK:** It is real life and there is no difference for me.
>
> **Female/27/Montreal, Canada:** I don't consider myself anonymous on the Internet. I use my real life and, if a nickname is needed, I use the same one for ten years now. Internet is a very important part of my "real life", I don't consider the two separated.

> **Female/23/BC, Canada:** I do not separate my internet and non-internet lives into "real life", even in quotation marks. The people with whom I interact on the internet are part of my life as much as the people I interact with at my job or on the bus: some of them are nameless strangers, some of them are deep friends. While there are some things I don't discuss in, say, my office environment, this is true of any person.

The above 23-year-old female makes a good point about transference of old relationship boundaries to cyberworld. Just as our lives are fragmented in 'real life,' with different groups of relationships, such as good friends, family, acquaintances, work colleagues, etc, our online selves merely add another group to the mix, one which may, or may not correspond to offline relationships, but is important nevertheless.

(2) Who needs anonymity?

Related to the above group, a large number of respondents stated that they did not use the internet anonymously, in any context. For them, the internet predominantly allowed them to maintain relationships:

> **Male/26/Vancouver, Canada:** I don't really use the internet [anonymously]. The internet is more helpful to me in maintaining relationships and co-ordinating my social life in some respects, but I wouldn't say it helps me to explore aspects of my identity not available in my "real life." Networking sites (i.e. Facebook) is great for friendships.

> **Female/22/Kelowna, Canada:** Socially, I only use the internet to communicate with people that I already know in "real life", though thanks to the internet I can communicate with more people than I would otherwise.

> **Female/40/Los Angeles, USA:** While I must agree that the internet is a great "tool" for social purposes (I keep in touch with far away friends & family) I'd have to disagree with using the internet to conceal my identity. Actually I find that down right creepy.

> **Female/39/Fairfax, USA:** I don't necessarily agree with the "anonymity" portion. My Facebook and LiveJournal accounts allow me to keep up with friends I haven't even seen in 20 years!

> **Male/29/Tel Aviv:** It's a great opportunity for social purposes, but not because of the anonymity. I think that the reason for, for example, Facebook's enormous success, is exactly because people act there under their real identity. I never could get the whole hang of the anonymity thing. I like knowing whom I'm conversing with.

One respondent felt strongly about his dislike for social networking sites:

Male/37/Bowling Green, USA: I am NOT a fan of the social networking sites, first off. Everything I can do there, I can do elsewhere, better. And they seem to put me with people (who I have known in the past) who are only interested in the most superficial style of interaction. I do enjoy more specialized forums, and I have a cadre of good connections on Twitter, my blog, and a mailing list. But it's less about anonymity than ability to transcend distances.

(3) Some anonymity OK

There were particular circumstances when people felt anonymity was beneficial, including:

While they were gaming:

Male/49/Ottawa, Canada: Actually, anonymity is not something I'm seeking online, unless I'm gaming. For much of my work and research, I like to contact people who are not masked/disguised or otherwise reconstructing themselves into second life digital entities.

Male/24/Australia: With social networking sites, I portray myself as I am in real life. All my actions are attributed to me and people know what I'm doing. I don't have any fake profiles for this purpose.

When I'm gaming, it's slightly different. Taking the role of a character lets you explore certain avenues you might not in real life. I find I can be more commanding and sometimes forceful online, i.e. when playing MMOs that require leadership of groups of players; whereas in real life, I'm most often happy to follow the herd.

While the above respondent makes a distinction between his online gaming characters and offline personality, the argument could be made that both these are aspects of his 'true' self. The ability to portray a forceful leader could be seen as an extension of his personality, something he does not feel comfortable or free to do in his day-to-day life. Just as the online disinhibition effect allows people to act differently online, without the fear of retribution, the same applies to gaming.

Similar to gaming, a group of respondents enjoyed the anonymity of the internet as it allowed them to find support and encouragement. They could discuss problems and issues they did not feel comfortable discussing with friends or family. The lack of a physical presence allowed them to open up in ways they could not offline:

Female/27/Calgary, Canada: I belong to several "music" based message boards and the anonymity lets me be more honest and to the point than I normally am in "real life".

> **Female/24/Omaha, USA:** For example, I draw but don't show most people in my "real life" but I post my art online for total strangers to see. Even if they judge me, hate it, love it, etc, I don't feel embarrassed, whereas in real life I am too worried about what people I know are thinking. Posting online has actually encouraged me to work on my skills and learn from people's examples, tutorials, advice, etc. if only for the compliments I might get. ^_^

> **Female/19/Missouri, USA:** I have a LiveJournal account, where I write about things that I feel, but I don't necessarily want my friends and family to know. I don't want them to see when I'm down or sad, so I pretend to be happy around them, and then I write about it on my LiveJournal… I think the internet is a great way for people to vent and also to make new friends.

Interestingly, using the internet anonymously, for social support, appeared to be a female tendency, while gaming was typically a male activity (as reported).

Others who reported remaining anonymous included those who browsed message boards or explored various topics of interest:

> **Male/20/San Francisco, USA:** I think the internet is great for social purposes, especially websites like myspace and Facebook, but I see those as more of an extension of who I am and another form of communication rather than another identity. However I love going on forums and message boards such as b9board because the anonymity allows me to say things I wouldn't say if people actually knew who I was and it allows me to have discussions with people that I most likely wouldn't have spoken to in real life.

> **Female/26/Prince George, Canada:** It is nice to be able to "browse" other people's opinions on certain topics, while remaining anonymous.

> **Male/27/Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:** I agree, only with the principle of anonymity. I do find that exploring is easier, however, the more people I am in contact with over the internet, the more my name is publicly accessible, hence less anonymity. Nevertheless, I still can navigate online venues that give me answers to aspects of my identity.

Anonymity allows people to be informational voyeurs, exploring home pages, personal profiles, information, opinions, etc, without committing to their own.

(4) Internet identity exploration

As shown above, the online fragmentation of identity is opening up another arena for relationship exploration. People compartmentalise their lives by activity and the internet allows for exploration of these different facets. This fragmentation should not be considered as negative, but rather as complementing the fluid and ephemeral nature of identity; while the core of who a person is remains stable, the outward

manifestations change.[188] The following respondents look to the internet to provide them with information not available in 'real life,' often due to geographic or perceived social constraints:

> **Female/32/Aberystwyth, Wales:** This is true for me to some extent, though the aspects of identity are not so much "not available" in "real life" as just not "accessible" to me at the moment. I am living in a small town while I complete my PhD studies: many of the things I browse on the internet relate to aspects of my identity that I expect to "come to fruition", if you like, at a point where I am more settled financially and in a more urban environment. I should add that my use of the internet is very much as a browser or lurker: I don't participate myself (e.g. I don't comment on blogs, I'm not on Facebook or Myspace, etc).
>
> **Male/42/Akron, USA:** It's not the anonymity that is important as much as the ability to connect with others who share certain interests. For example, I'm a huge fan of the Australian rock band You Am I, yet I have just a few friends who like them. The net allows me to connect with other fans via their message board and email list.
>
> **Female/24/Edinburgh, UK:** I love gymnastic but don't explore this in "real life" ie I don't go to classes or competitions and didn't do it from a young age. On the internet I can watch past Olympic competitions and world championships, etc. It's a great leisure without supporting a specific person or country.
>
> **Male/34/Dublin, Ireland:** I expect I do explore aspects of my identity online in ways which can actually only be done online, but I don't think this is necessarily about anonymity or related to it. I actually try to be quite clear and constant these days about hooking up my "real" and "online" selves (because of my research, I didn't want to feel there was any duplicity on my part or confusion about who I was or how I could be located).

One respondent, a 44 year old male from St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, noted that the ephemeral nature of identity might be something relegated to youth, who are more concerned with 'finding' themselves:

> I can't say that I use the internet in this manner, although I do agree with the sentiment. I have the feeling that this is more important for younger folks who are typically more intensively engaged in self-exploration and the "trying on" of various identities. Similarly, younger folks are more concerned with

[188] Patti Valkenburg and Jochen Peter, 'Adolescents' Identity Experiments on the Internet: Consequences for Social Competence and Self-Concept Unity,' *Communication Research* 35.2 (2008): 208-231; Judith S. Donath, 'Identity and deception in the virtual community,' in *Communities in Cyberspace* eds. Marc A. Smith and Peter Kollock (London: Routledge, 2000): 29-59; Andrew F. Wood and Matthew J. Smith, *Online Communication: Linking Technology, Identity, and Culture* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Eribaum Associates, Inc., 2005).

keeping in touch with peers b/c they fear not being invited to the best parties… ;-)

Online Youth Identity

While little research has been conducted concerning youth and online identities[189] a field is starting to emerge, especially around the use of social networking sites. Considering identity formation is such an important aspect of growing up, more research certainly needs to be done to explore how technology is impacting, or guiding, it. As Valentine and Holloway note, there is a reciprocal relationship between youth and technology. They argue that online and offline worlds should be not considered distinct, but as interconnected, working in tandem. Through empirical research, they investigated '*how* on-line spaces are used, encountered, and interpreted within the context of young people's off-line everyday selves'[190].

In their examination of three schools, two urban and one isolated rural, Valentine and Holloway discovered four ways in which youth incorporate the offline world into their online one:

1. Through direct (re)presentations of their off-line identities and activities
2. Even when children construct alternative identities online, they are often contingent on offline identities and peer groups culture; they are constructed to enhance offline identities
3. Through the reproduction of offline class and gender relations
4. Technological limitations, or limitations to technology, affect the nature and extent of online activities.[191]

Similarly, they found four ways in which youth incorporated their online worlds into their offline selves:

1. Through the maintenance of both distant and local relationships offline relationships on the internet
2. Incorporating information gathered online into offline world
3. Online friendships incorporated into offline social circles
4. Online activities can position users differently, recontextualising offline identities.[192]

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[189] Elisheva F. Gross, 'Adolescent Internet use: What we expect, what teens report,' *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 25.6 (2004): 633-649.
[190] Gill Valentine and Sarah Holloway, 'Cyberkids? Exploring Children's Identities and Social Networks in On-line and Off-line Worlds,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92.2 (2002): 305.
[191] Ibid., 313.
[192] Ibid., 316.

What the article does not mention, however, is *where* these youth are located online, what sites are they using, and how are they using them. Evidence from my research suggests that youth are primarily using the internet for social networking and looking up information, but what is pertinent is how this impacts identity formation and their ability to negotiate online/offline relationships.

Even though research is now emerging on social networking sites and youth involvement, little has been conducted on how youth present themselves online. One study, by Lampe, Ellison and Stainfield, however, did find that first year Michigan State University students were mainly using Facebook to keep in contact with offline friends rather than strangers, and believed their profiles accurately described themselves. Their study found that, by the second semester of their first year, 95.5% of respondents were Facebook members, with 12% spending over an hour a day on the site. When asked, on a 5-point scale, what activities they were participating in, the highest rated mean frequency was, 'keep in touch with high school friends' (m=4.63), followed closely by 'find our more about a person they had met socially' (m=4.51). At the other end of their results, student were not often using Facebook to 'find casual sex partners' (m=1.32) or 'find people to meet offline' (m=2.41)[193]. Most of these students, therefore, were utilizing the 'social searching and browsing' aspects of Facebook, to essentially keep in touch with others, while also browsing profiles of new acquaintances, to gain further information about their personalities.

Of primary relevance to this thesis are the results of their study related to youth and their perception of identity. When these youth were asked how well their Facebook profile represented them, on the same 5-point scale, the mean was 4.16, which indicates that they feel quite highly that their online profiles match their 'true selves'. There are limitations to this study, however, which the authors acknowledge, in that Facebook is only one of a number of social networking sites, so the results could potentially vary between sites, as each has a different purpose and social etiquette. Lampe et al. also only interviewed first-year students, and with social networking sites constantly changing, any research on them quickly becomes obsolete.

[193] C. Lampe, N. Ellison and C. Steinfield, 'A face(book) in the crowd,' (proceedings of the 20th Century Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Alberta, Canada, 2006): 168.

My research also indicates that youth are highly engaged with social networking sites. Looking specifically at the Net Generation, on a 5-point frequency of use scale, the mean was 3.97. The mean increases to 4.00 when looking at those 20 years old and younger. In a comparison to the Lampe *et al*'s study, results are quite similar, with those from age 18 to 22 (approximate first year undergraduate ages) reporting a mean frequency of use of 4.30 (SD=1.098). The following chart shows the mean frequency of use for social networking sites, as broken down by decades:

Table 35: Mean Frequencies: Using social networking sites (divided by age)

Age	N	Mean
0-19	263	3.996198
20-29	489	4.137014
30-39	241	3.207469
40-49	113	2.769912
50-50	66	2.409091
60-69	14	2.357143
80-89	2	1.5
Total	1188	3.665825

From this chart it is quite clear that Facebook activity is most predominant in those aged 20 to 29, or the upper end of the Net Generation. These young adults, while at the outer reaches of youth, are still digital natives and highly involved in the culture. This is not to say that people grow out of the social networking phenomenon, but that there are generational differences related to culture and social norms. The Net Generation will need to be followed to see if the results differ as they age, or if engagement with social networking sites is ingrained in their psyche.

As with the Lampe et al. study, there was a sense that youth at the high school age were using SNS to keep up with local gossip, maintain and strengthen offline relationships, and keep up with friends who had moved away. There was no sense that these youth were using the internet to meet and form relationships with people they did not already know offline. SNS were an integral part of high school life, to the point that, without using them, they felt 'left out', or social outcasts. Depending on our perspective, social networking sites for high school youth can either be a social crutch or aid.

The following responses express how youth are using social networking sites to keep up with friends after someone has moved away:

> **Female/16/Edinburgh, UK:** [social networking sites] are amazing because I used to live in England, so I get to keep in touch with all my friends from down there.
>
> **Female/12/Edinburgh, UK:** I used to live in Musselburgh, and I can contact all my friends there.
>
> **Female/12/Edinburgh, UK:** I used to live in England, so I keep in contact with my friends.
>
> **Male/12/Edinburgh, UK:** I used to live in Australia, so I keep in contact with everyone.

Alternatively, the most common reason was to keep up with friends they knew in their school:

> **Male/16/Edinburgh, UK:** All the gossip's on them.
>
> **Male/15/Edinburgh, UK:** See what other people are up to.
>
> **Male/17/Edinburgh, UK:** I've got bebo, but I just use that to find out about gossip and that.

The students were quick to point out that they did not use the internet to talk to people they did not already know. When asked if they used the internet to find new friends:

> **Female/13/Edinburgh, UK:** You could, but I don't think a lot of people would add you if you didn't know them. Mostly people you know already. Yeah, you stick to people that you know.

The type of interaction noted by these youth is dependent on their identity being known, in order to foster and maintain relationships that are initiated offline, generally during school time. My interviews did not delve into online exploration of identity, as it was clear that youth are focused on communication and social networking sites in an open forum, not through anonymity. These youth did explore their musical tastes online, but listening to music while online was a common activity.

Perhaps with youth, this fragmentation can be seen as a natural, maturation process, in that, as our lives become busier, compartmentalizing becomes a way to

manage our environment, work, play, and social contacts. What makes it different from past generations is that the internet becomes the circle to hold in, and tie together all the personal interconnections. Digital natives are ultimately free to explore, as well as constantly change their Facebook profiles to match their daily opinion, all within an environment that represents who they are, or choose to be.

***

This chapter has explored the issue of anonymity in regards to identity formation online. Although the internet allows for the production of identities which could be conceived as entirely removed from how one portrays themselves offline, it was shown that most internet users are more focused on communication, and having their identity known to others. Youth, especially, use the internet for communication via social networking sites, and online messenger services; technologies that are focused on people portraying themselves as accurately as possible. It should be noted, however, that there remains a large amount of agency amongst users, as they are able to construct how they are portrayed online.

An important aspect of this chapter was the postulation that there is no difference between one's online and offline identities. Through the eclecticism promoted by digitality, these versions of the self become fragments of the whole – but nevertheless part of one's 'true' identity.

PART III: IPOD CULTURE AND CONCEPTS OF SOCIABILITY

3.1: WHERE MEANING AND USE CROSS LINES

iPod culture is a conceptual framework in which we can examine issues of taste, meaning, and identity, as mediated by technology. iPod culture, while including the use of such mobile MP3 devices, is not defined by the technology. The iPod becomes symbolic of, and synonymous with digital culture. The iPod, therefore, is a crystallization of digitality in physical form; as technology, it holds a social construct.

This chapter will explore the concept of 'iPod culture' and how it unites music and the internet through the formation of relationships, within the larger culture of digitality. A short historical account of the device will be provided before drawing on media theorists, such as Marshall McLuhan, James Katz and Jonathan Sterne in order to conceive iPod culture as a cultural phenomenon. I argue that the culture guides the way people interact with music and, as will be examined further in Chapter 3.2, each other. Various approaches have been used to analyze media devices and their use in society, but most have failed to recognize that iPods are, first and foremost, a musical device, so little focus has been paid to the actual act of listening to music.

Following a review of the current literature surrounding and influencing iPod culture and how it differs from the Walkman, data from interview surveys will examine *how* users are currently using MP3 devices. While this chapter is about iPod culture, the overriding section (Part III) is ultimately concerned with users and their relationships with technology and music, as seen through the social construct perspective.

iPod Culture

Like art, music, fashion, food trends and lifestyle choices, technology is shaped by and shapes society. The iPod has come to represent, as well as influence the digital age. People are beginning to think and act like their iPods[194] by demanding immediacy, ease of use, beauty, and thinking outside of the box, a random 'shuffle'

[194] Steven Levy, *The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Became the Defining Object of the 21st Century* (London: Ebury, 2006): 5.

of sorts; or, more with reality, the iPod is a reflection of who we are. The iPod evolved from the Walkman generation, with obvious similarities, but also distinct differences.

While the Walkman allowed for the easy portability of music, the iPod extends that to portability of *identity*, with the immediacy and shock of being able to shuffle through your entire library of music at the click of a button, or touch of a scroll wheel. While the walkman created the desire to have music on your person, to control your sonic environment, the iPod represents a whole technological age – the digital age, or digitality. More than just a portable music device, it encompasses internet culture, music downloading, new skill sets, shifts in relationships and communication, and a new sense of personal, identity formation.

Music technology is interesting not only for the technological aspects, but also the sociological ones to help us understand how it alters the way people interact with the music, and each other. Any technological advancement changes the face of society and how people act, but music technology does so at the primal level, that of emotions and identity. As noted by Jonathan Sterne, 'technologies are interesting precisely because they can play a significant role in people's lives. Technologies are repeatable social, cultural, and material processes crystallized into mechanisms.'[195] They become an extension of our being, a mechanical prosthesis of sorts, which does not directly aid our daily functionality, but seemingly enhances our being.

As music recording and playback technology continues to grow, develop and spread, a common ideology of thought has emerged, in that technology shapes how we interact, listen, and know music. As Mark Coleman has noted:

> Sound reproduction didn't instantly change the nature of music, but the invention of the phonograph and the introduction of phonograph records gradually transformed our basic relationship with music. Technology to a large extent determines what we hear and how we hear it.[196]

This directly correlates with what Robert Albrecht has noted in his book, *Mediating the Muse*, in which he states:

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[195] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003): 8.
[196] Mark Coleman, *Playback: From the Victrola to MP3, 100 Years of Music, Machines, and Money* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2003): 1.

> As technology restructures the ways in which music is mediated and collectively experienced, it also transforms the ways in which we think, perceive and interact with the world. These restructurings can be detected in the multiple levels at which music communicates, revealing not only superficial changes in styles and musical taste, but also profound and transformative changes in human psychology and the very organization of cultural life.[197]

The works of Coleman and Albrecht are reminiscent of the writings and ideologies of Marshall McLuhan in the 1980s. McLuhan's theory that the medium is the message has had a profound affect on the landscape of communications studies, in that we now understand that the focus is not on *what* is playing, on any particular music device, but *how* it is being played.[198] While some communications scholars will agree with McLuhan, many sociologists would argue that his theory ignores 'the music as message' and how it can be disseminated. Undoubtedly, what is being played is important from a sociological perspective, as well as how one would acquire and desire to play such styles, but the question then becomes, is *how* it is being played significantly more important? In the case of the iPod, there are valid arguments for both sides. Although McLuhan was writing before the creation of the Walkman, his theories do hold some truth with the creation of the iPod. Because it represents more than just a musical device, the medium truly does become the message or, more appropriately, the medium becomes the signifier.

A central theme of McLuhan's writings on media was the dichotomy of hot and cool media. Hot media extends a single sense into 'high definition,' while cool media leaves much to be filled in by the receiver. Hot media does not leave much information to be filled in by the user, and consequently has low participation rates. Examples of hot media, according to McLuhan, include movies, radio, the phonetic alphabet, lectures, and books. Cool media includes: television, telephone, hieroglyphic characters, seminars, and dialogues.[199] This form of categorizing technology has acquired much criticism, sometimes resulting in a blanket dismissal of McLuhan's views on technology. I, too, would argue that this dichotomy of

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[197] Robert Albrecht, *Mediating the Music: A Communications Approach to Music, Media, and Cultural Change* (Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc., 2004).
[198] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Latimer Trend & Co. Ltd., 1964).
[199] Ibid.

technology is inappropriate, especially for new digital technologies such as the internet, which can be viewed as both hot and cold, according to McLuhan's definitions. While there is some relevance as to whether or not a technology incites participation or enhancement of one's senses, it is more relevant to describe how one forms relationships with it, and how these relationships impact sociability.

Where McLuhan's opinions are relevant to iPod culture are his thoughts on 'the gadget lover' and the theory that technology is an extension of the body. In McLuhan's words:

> Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies and such extension also demands new ratios or new equilibriums among the other organs and extensions of the body.[200]

As an extension of ourselves, we are free to use the technology in any form desirable, thereby forming new meanings and understanding of the devices and, in turn, new relationships. This theory acknowledges the subjective experiences and relationships of the user.

Paul Levinson has written about McLuhan's metaphors concerning media and technological impacts. Levinson maintains that McLuhan's work is even more important and relevant today, than when it was written. He notes:

> Since metaphors intrinsically exceed the status quo, we can well understand why McLuhan plied and prized them so in his attempts to generate new insights about media: in overshooting the mark, the metaphor gives the mark – and our understanding of it – room to move and grow. In contrast, definitive, fully documented descriptions of a technology, even if they are correct and thus useful in the present, may tell us little about the future.[201]

For Levinson, McLuhan's primary metaphor, *the medium is the message*, relates to notions of shifting the focus from the content to the medium that delivers the content. I would take this a step further, by applying McLuhan's concepts to digital youth and the invisibility of digital technology. As an extension of the body, digital youth form specific and varied relationships with technology, but at the same time, they do not always see the technology in their actions. As discussed in Chapter 2.3, digital natives are not concerned with the process of the internet, only with what

[200] Ibid., 54.
[201] Paul Levinson, *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001): 28.

the internet can provide them. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, have not developed the same relationship with digital technologies, and ultimately can be distracted by the process of the technology, as opposed to focusing on the media

In applying this to iPod culture, the iPod becomes an actual physical extension of the body through the use of headphones and/or earbuds. The iPod is also a device which holds information, in the form of recorded sound. Although the user focuses on the content of their iPod, the iPod never truly becomes an invisible device. Through miniaturization, it has become quite small, essentially disappearing from sight in pockets, etc., but the tell-tale sign of the wire connecting to the device inevitably gives it away, making it visible to the mind. Although the design of the device is where it comes closest to being invisible, the ease of use and lack of 'technicality' make the technology behind the device invisible, allowing the user to focus on the media, the sound, and the literal message. The music listened to also becomes a literal extension of the self, in the form of identity. Just as musical tastes are an integral part of our identity, the music on an iPod characterizes that identity. This extension is invisible to outside users; onlookers can see one's attachment to a device, but not the content. There is a sense of listening to the self, which is extended into the technology, and then reflected back towards the self through a personalized loop of sound. iPod users are essentially involved in a self-reflexive extension of the self, a physical extension caught in a loop of emotional reflection.

Mobile music devices allow for autonomy in various soundscapes, where it would otherwise not be present. As music can be used for soundscape regulation[202], these technologies place the power back in the hands of the user. This power is intensified by the personal soundscape which is created, as no one else needs to know what you are listening to, or what your emotional relationship is with it. It is your identity, injected into the world, but only for yourself. R. Murray Schafer was the first to write about the concept of the soundscape, and his theories can readily be applied to iPod culture. Schafer was well aware of the way that soundscapes are continuously changing, often through technological developments, as well as the continued development of urban areas. We have essentially evolved from a 'hi-fi' society, where there was a one-to-one ratio of sound produced to what was heard, to

[202] Helmi Jarviluoma, ed., *Soundscapes: Essays on Vroom and Moo* (Institute of Rhythm, Music and the Writers, 1994); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).

a 'lo-fi' society, where the world is overpopulated with sounds, to the point where much is drowned out by noise pollution.[203] Our ears have developed coping strategies, in order to filter the immense amount of sound bombarding them in urban settings. As Schafer notes:

> The sense of hearing cannot be closed off at will. There are no earlids. When we go to sleep, our perception of sound is the last door to close and it is also the first to open when we awaken.[204]

As technology developed to provide the personalized soundscape, our relationship with sound also changed. Schafer notes that the space produced by headphones can always be considered private property. Headphone listening fosters a relationship with sound at the bodily level. Sounds are directed into the body, creating a 'head-space,' unlike previous technology.

Music recording and playback technology created many defining moments over the past 120 years. Traditional histories of music have shown the importance of music in all social roles, but sound had been temporal, fleeting and immediate, with no way to capture it for future use. It was immediate, with only the memory to remind of us it, or the score to analyze. Music itself has always been repeatable, through learning music, orality, and the written score, but the *sounds* themselves were not repeatable. Even the same Chopin prelude could not be played the same way twice. While the conditions could be mimicked, no two performances would *ever* be exactly the same. Recorded music destroyed much of the temporality of music and, as Walter Benjamin has alluded to in the realm of art reproduction: the aura is being destroyed.[205] Imagine what it would have been like for Edison and his supporters to hear the first tinny sounds of recorded voice being played back for them. No one had previously ever heard their own voice apart from their body. No one had been able to preserve sound like they could preserve art. Photography had

[203] R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1977).
[204] Ibid., 11.
[205] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968): 217-252.

only recently begun capturing images, true to life[206], and now the phonograph could capture sound.

There are many historical accounts of recorded sound available, so I feel I can skip over the first generations of playback devices and begin with the history of the cassette. This is by no means an attempt to downplay the importance of those first devices, as they rank with many important musical inventions of the last two hundred years, but they have already been written on extensively.[207]

Cassette Culture vs. iPod Culture: similarities vs. disparities

Playback devices have allowed people to control their sonic environments, but the Walkman has become the quintessential device. The combination of speakers and portability secured for the consumer the ability to listen to their own personal music at any time and situation. In 1925, the use of headphones was advertised as a necessity for high fidelity in personal sound[208], but the Walkman created portability, increased immediacy and represented a progression towards miniaturization in musical devices. While the Walkman essentially set the stage, the iPod would take this another step further on the evolution of musical digitalization.

It is interesting to note that, prior to its launch, the Walkman was not expected to sell very well. It was not targeted for the mass market, but rather as a novelty item for those few who were technology-obsessed or music connoisseurs. As noted by Millard:

> But why would anyone want to own a tape player that was just slightly larger than the cassette it played? Masuru Ibuka of Sony was interested in a very personal stereo, and the company's engineers made a model for him…ignoring the advice of the marketing department, Sony took a chance with a product that the experts said would never sell…In 1979 Sony introduced their Soundabout cassette player, which was later called the *Walkman*…[it] was initially treated as something of a novelty in the audio industry. It was priced at $200 and could not be considered as a product for the mass market.[209]

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[206] While the camera obscura was essentially used to create artists sketches of real images since the 16th century, the first photography to be produced were not until the 1820s.

[207] For an excellent account of the social impact of early recorded music see: William H. Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The phonograph and popular memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Also of note: Mark Coleman, *Playback: From the Victrola to MP3, 100 years of Music, Machines, and Money* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2003); Andre Millard, *America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound, 2nd Ed.* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[208] Sterne, *The Audible Past,* 87.

[209] Millard, *America on Record,* 323-325.

Contrary to those 'experts,' the Walkman became one of the highest-selling music playback devices. Millard continues:

> The Walkman became one of the most successful audio players of the postwar period…Sony's hunch was right; Americans did buy them in the millions, and Walkman become one of those products that everybody owned, like a television, radio, or VCR. In the 10 years after the introduction of the Walkman, Sony sold 50 million units, including 25 million in the United States. Its competitors sold millions more. They were manufactured all over the Far East and came in a broad range of sizes and prices, with the cheapest model selling for around $20. By the 1990s the market for personal stereos in the United States was around 20 million to 30 million unites a year.[210]

The Walkman, as with any audio device, changed the way people listen to and interact with music and their sonic environments; it changed their relationships with their music, and environments[211]. While other audio technology, such as the Boombox, allowed people to control their sonic environment while encroaching on that of others, the Walkman afforded listeners total control of their soundscape. Users had the ability to listen to their own personal music collections at any given moment. With Muzak attempting to control the sonic environment of many public spheres, the Walkman brought the power back to the consumer. As noted by Millard:

> It is the ultimate expression of portability. It is the symbol of the ubiquitous nature of recorded sound; Americans are now able to go anywhere or do anything with the accompaniment of music from the cassette tape. It established a closer association with the listener, a one-on-one relationship between people and their machines that changed the way that we hear recorded sound.[212]

The Walkman allowed music to be a very personal, internal expression of identity, in contrast with Boomboxes and their loud, externalization of self. People who play their music for others may be more likely to alter their choices, based on how they would like to be perceived, whereas the Walkman made choice invisible, and perhaps was thus a truer marker of self. One could listen to anything, without the hassle of having others judge according to taste. As the Walkman's popularity and sales increased, users altered their listening habits and, in turn, how they desired

[210] Ibid., 325.
[211] Chris Hardman, 'Walkmanology,' *The Drama Review* 27.4 (1983).
[212] Ibid., 326.

their music. Walkmans became ubiquitous as consumers enjoyed this newfound intimacy and control over their sonic environments. As Coleman notes:

> Portable cassette players, though, fuelled private consumption of music. Headphones became ubiquitous on urban streets. It is no accident that the new generation of players in these early eighties became known as *personal stereos*. Almost overnight, portability turned into a crucial issue for audio consumers. People now expected freedom of movement while playing back recorded music – or at least they demanded it as an option.[213]

These sentiments are mirrored by Millard when he notes that users demanded control in their environments. The Walkman became both a signal for the advancements in recorded music, and also a catalyst for change, in that people do not want to have the music of others imposed on them at will. In Millard's words:

> One very important function of the portable personal stereo is that it acts to drown out the oppression of noise in or society. Putting on the soft plastic earphones and playing a tape instantly cuts out the background noise of modern life – a necessity in a world full of amplified noise.[214]

The ubiquity of headphones, and the personalized listening style of the Walkman, then begs the questions: how does this affect socialization and aspects of sociability? In terms of the people-people relationships, are people becoming more isolated and focused on the individual as opposed to a community of users?

Shuhei Hosokawa wrote his article, *The Walkman Effect*, in 1984, while the Walkman was in its relative infancy and just taking hold of the world market. He argued that the 80s was the decade of 'autonomy,'[215] both from each other, but also from the natural world. Industrialization and urbanization distanced society from the natural world, and the Walkman further isolated urbanites from each other. In Hosokawa's words:

> Especially in recent decades, they lost that healthy relationship with the environment, become alienated and turn into David Riesman's "lonely crowd," suffering from incommunicability. The Walkman, for such an interviewer, is taken as encouraging self-enclosure and political apathy among the young, under a structure of mass control.[216]

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[213] Coleman, *Playback*, 158.
[214] Millard, *America on Record*, 326.
[215] Shuhei Hosokawa, 'The Walkman Effect,' *Popular Music* 4: Performers and Audiences (1984): 165.
[216] Ibid., 165.

Hosokawa likens the Walkman to a signifier for postmodernism and the isolation of the *self*. The Walkman, therefore, 'represents the parasitic and/or symbolic *self* which has now become autonomous and mobile.'[217] With postmodernism, absolute Truth has been abolished through societal changes, and the Walkman further emphasizes that each individual experiences the world differently. Not only do they see the world differently, it is visually obvious that they are listening to the world differently. The community created through common soundscape is abolished in favour of personalized experiences.

Amidst the criticism surrounding the Walkman, and subsequently the iPod, and its promotion of isolation and individualization, it cannot be ignored that there is still a community being created through the device. Walkman users see other users as similar, or 'in the club.' There is a common understanding of what is occurring when listening to music on the device that all users share – a commonality of interests and a desire for constant personalized music. As Hosokawa argues, there becomes a mobility of self and a community of users. The Walkman:

> Crosses every predetermined line of the acoustic designers. It enables us to move towards an autonomous pluralistically structured awareness of reality, but not towards a self-enclosed refuge or into narcissistic regression.[218]

There are obvious similarities between the Walkman and the iPod, which will be explored further in this chapter, but there are also numerous differences which set these products apart. The differences are not only market driven, but also generational. While the Walkman represented the ultimate in portable music devices that utilized analog technology, the iPod represents not only portable digital music, but the digital revolution.

Evolution of Digitality

The concept of digital music has radically altered the music industry, music itself, and in turn, our society. At the most elemental level, digital music can be reduced to digital means or, in other words, binary code. Binary code is created through a series of numbers in different arrangements of the numbers 0 and 1. Morse code, in its codification of sound into dots and dashes, was essentially a pre-cursor to the digital

[217] Ibid., 166.
[218] Ibid., 175.

binary code. It is interesting to note, as Millard writes, that it is in telephone technology that digitalization occurs first:

> Digital transformation of sound was first attempted in the laboratories of the telephone companies in their never-ending quest to get more messages on the wires. Like the acoustic and electric eras that preceded it, the digital era of sound recording was an application of technology devised to send telephone messages of electric speech. Turning the sounds of speech into numbers meant that more words could be crammed into a single cable and that the problem of cross-talk between messages was minimalized. Binary codes of digital speech could also be easily transmitted.[219]

Digital technology allowed for the production of the compact disc, or CD. Unlike tape or analog recording, the digital files contained on a CD are read by a laser, and with the digitization of sound, the music can be re-played indefinitely, without degradation of sound quality. With analog recording, especially with the magnetic tape that is used in cassettes, each playing reduces the quality until the point at which the tape either breaks, or becomes un-listenable. The quality of a digital recording never changes, because it is not a recording of the *actual* sound, but a reproduction of the binary code that represents the sound. The music, itself, is not being repeated, but a series of numbers which symbolize the music.

Digital recording, through the use of computers, has allowed producers to easily reshape the sound of the music before it reaches the consumer's ears. Pitches can be altered, sounds can be added, and instruments can be created in the digital realm. They are not 'real,' in a sense that they are not analog instruments, but become real in the sound booth. Coleman notes the difference between vinyl and CD when he writes:

> Instead of splicing and dicing tape, digital editors alter binary code. It's possible to make hundreds of changes in a few seconds of music: surface noise, blurs, muffling, pops, and clicks can all be eliminated. Older, predigital (analog) recordings could also be converted to digital with little discernable difference. This allowed a wealth of music to be heard – and purchased – by a new, presumably hungry, audience. If the improved quality of digital recording and remixing sounded clinical and dry to some, many more perceived the new format as a revelation.[220]

[219] Millard, *America on Record,* 346.
[220] Coleman, *Playback*, 164.

CDs first came on the market in 1982, only three years after the Walkman was introduced, but it took a few years for them to become the dominant format. For a time, the format war was not only between cassette and vinyl, but also between cassette, vinyl and CD. In 1986, for example, cassettes were leading the war with 350 million units sold, while vinyl sold 110 million and CDs about 50 million. It was not until two years later that CDs outsold all other formats.[221] As CDs became the dominant format, the popular music industry underwent drastic changes musically, which prompted people to wonder if popular music was dying and the CD would go with it. Vinyl culture perpetuated teen idols and promoted listening to the whole album. CDs, with the ease in which one could skip from one song to the next, or utilize the random function, promoted the favouring of singles over album. Albums were recorded that producers knew only had a couple of good songs, or singles, with the rest as filler that listeners may or may not feel the need to just skip over. The format played into society's need for instant gratification and perfection, but to the detriment of the industry. After the early 90s surge in grunge rock, pop did not hold the same appeal and many people questioned where the industry was going, and if there was a future for pop. The society of the new millennium wanted good music, with meaning, that perhaps they were not going to find in the pop that was being produced.

An unanticipated hitch with digital recording and the CD, though, was that users would find a way to rip music onto their computers. The argument over blank discs and home recording was great, but ultimately, nothing compared to the technology of ripping and sharing music through computers and the internet. When CDs were first introduced on the market, the internet was not widely available, and certainly would not support P2P file sharing programs as it does now. Essentially, CD technology was too advanced for its time, with inconceivable consequences for the producers. Coleman notes:

> By the end of the 1990s, recorded music could be lifted, liberated from its package, reproduced, and reconstituted. In current parlance, CDs can now be *ripped* (music transferred to computer files) and *burned* (music files transferred to blank discs).[222]

[221] Ibid., 165.
[222] Ibid., 177.

It did not take long for technology to advance and it has now become so normalized in our lives that the act of stealing music online does not even register as a crime to many. Millard notes, on the socialization of the internet into our society that[223]:

> Even the inventors of file sharing did not fully appreciate the consequences of what they were doing. At the beginnings of the 1990s the Internet, digital streaming, and CD recorders in home computers were virtually unknown. There were no emails, no Web sites, and no connectivity. But during this decade the home computer went from being a high-tech luxury to an absolute necessity. Emails and Web surfing became so commonplace, so much a part of daily routines, that it was hard to remember a time when they were not there.[224]

The combination of ripping CDs onto computers, the discovery of converting the files into MP3 format, and the availability of high-speed internet, resulted in one of the most defining moments in the retail music industry: music could be easily exchanged between people through P2P file-sharing programs, such as Napster. Napster began the revolution in 1999, and by early 2001, there were 13.6 million users in the US alone.[225] Other programs emerged, but the industry caught on, accusing users of stealing music and, in turn, suing Shawn Fanning, creator of Napster. When this did not stop illegal downloading, industry conglomerates began to target individual downloaders, and it still continues today.

P2P file sharing creates a unique community of internet users. People who have never met can share and exchange songs, just as friends would at home, but on a global scale. As Millard notes, it 'forged a global community of listeners.'[226] This community of file-sharers was predominantly college-aged people. Millard notes that 'some estimates claim that as many as 73% of all college students in the United

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[223] I find it interesting to talk to the generation before mine about growing up without computers, and without internet. We (my generation, and those after it) do not realize how convenient computers have made our lives. Just in the realm of school and education, how much more difficult and time consuming work would be without the computer to quickly type things up. And the sheer availability of information now as compared to before is overwhelming. Any subject, no matter how obtuse, is covered in the internet. Websites such as Wikipedia have made information so widely available. It allowed for a much greater dissemination of information, and a generation which has a hunger for this readily available knowledge. There are those that argue that the teens of this society are dumber and less motivated, but how could that be? With the internet it is hard *not* to learn anything. Any question one could have can be practically instantly answered. It may take less motivation to learn, but ease of learning does not correspond to ignorance and less intelligence.

[224] Millard, *America on Record,* 388-389.

[225] Coleman, *Playback*, 178.

[226] Millard, *America on Record,* 392.

States were using Napster at its height.'[227] It makes sense that the college students of the early 21st century would be the ones to utilize file-sharing. They were born at a time when the internet was in its infancy, grew up with the changing formats, and helped influence its development. While older generations may have been wary of the new technology, the younger generation took full advantage of the internet and what it had to offer. It was a college student who created Napster, and it was college students who used it. The communal aspects of sharing and community of college dorms were magnified to a global level. Instead of sharing your music with your roommate, you could now share it with the whole world.

As this digital revolution evolves and grows, the internet is steadily becoming the dominant form of popular media in one little space. Music, television, movies and gaming are all available online, often with forums to connect to others with similar tastes. The global village is increasingly becoming a reality, as the world continues to shrink. It is interesting to note how this phenomenon is even being recognized in traditional media outlets, such as the news magazine *Times*. This year, the *Times* 'person of the year' was 'YOU,' because of the control we each have through the internet. In particular, websites such as YouTube have allowed anyone to post videos online to achieve their 15 minutes of fame; everyone can be a director or film artist. The question becomes, what separates these people from those who do it 'legitimately'? The internet provides instant interest and viewers, without the high costs of traditional publicity. Artists, such as Justin Bieber, have capitalized on this phenomenon by gaining their fame almost entirely through the internet, especially YouTube.

iPod Culture: Where Digital Meets Music

Portable MP3 players have been on the market since 1998, but until the iPod, they were, for the most part, considered too expensive for what they had to offer, and their newness discouraged buyers who were not interested in yet another format war. In October 1998, Diamond Multimedia Systems, Inc. released the RIO PMP 300. It could store 60 minutes of music and sold for less than $200. It was the first MP3 player to catch the attention of consumers because of its relative affordability and

[227] Ibid., 394.

ability to carry more songs than one CD.[228] The technology did not fully take hold, though, until the iPod, and, more specifically, until the iPod was available for non-Mac users, because of compatibility with the iTunes store.

The origin story of the iPod has been retold in a number of places, some with the aim of mythologizing the device.[229] Just as the story of the release of the Walkman confused and created interest in the public, so did the release of the iPod. As Ayers writes:

> "Hint: it's not a Mac." This was the teaser on the invitation to a press conference that Apple organized to unveil, in late October 2001, a "breakthrough digital device." According to the rumours, the company had created a portable music player that promised to embody the idea of "digital lifestyle" envisioned by Steve Jobs with the launch of Mac OS X. That device was in fact the iPod, and in retrospect the teaser really hinted at a product that was destined to permanently change the perception of Apple as just a computer manufacturer.[230]

The first iPod, launched in November 2001, suffered from poor sales. At the time, it was hardly the society-changing device that Steve Jobs had hoped for. As Dylan Jones writes, in his autobiographical account of his iPod experiences, *iPod, therefore I am*:

> And then they launched it, on 10 November, a month after 9/11. Not only was it birthed into a country already deep in mourning, but the bottom had fallen out of the tech market (hell, for months the bottom fell out of all markets). The iPod was criticized for being expensive – $399 – and for the fact that it was only compatible with Macintosh. And it didn't hold many songs (wasn't one thousand enough guys?), or have a compatible online music store to download from. Apart from that it was perfect.[231]

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[228] Coleman, *Playback,* 200.

[229] For a complete history of the iPod technologically, as in how it was formed within the Apple company, the names behind the device, etc., see Dylan Jones' *iPod, Therefore I Am* and Steven Levy's *The Perfect Thing*. Jones's account follows his own experiences with the device, as well as a detailed history of the iPod and it's creation. Levy's book focuses less on personal experience, and more on a non-academic look at the history of the iPod and it's subsequent place in this digital media generation. As of now they are the only two books available which focus directly on the iPod. Jones' personal experiences with his iPod are important because many people feel the same attachments to theirs, and it gives particular insight into possible emotional attachments to not only music, but also the software that contains the music. Levy's account is important for providing current reactions to the device through cited newspaper articles, and also makes somewhat scholarly references to sociologists and musicologists, while still remaining entertaining and very accessible to the public.

[230] Ayers, *Cybersounds*, 189.

[231] Dylan Jones, *iPod, Therefore I Am* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005): 60.

iPod secured its market in 2003, when it released the second generation iPod, which could be used with PCs in April, and further solidified it in October of the same year, with the release of iTunes and iTunes Music stores for Windows. Compatibility with Windows opened the floodgate for any computer-user to own an iPod, and the music store allowed for easy purchasing and listening to millions of songs. It is somewhat amazing that iTunes has thrived to the extent that it has. Even with the controversy of copyright infringement, in regards to illegally downloading music through P2P software, it still occurs, and will likely continue indefinitely. The question then becomes, why would anyone willingly pay for music when they could easily acquire it for free? The iTunes store is not a necessity for downloading music for use on the iPod, as it will recognize any MP3 file, whether it has been downloaded from the iTunes website, or any other illegal downloading site. To their credit, iTunes has facilitated an agreement between the consumer and recording industry conglomerates, in that it will provide a legal and easy way for consumers to acquire music, while the music industry retains some of their profits and artists their royalties. Consumers can now download music for a small fee of 99 cents per song. Illegal downloading seemed to signal the end of the CD, and therefore the end of many jobs and profits in the music industry, but iTunes will help to maintain the balance, to ensure the music industry remains viable.

The death of the CD, though, is quickly becoming inevitable. iTunes, with its focus on single-song sales, has almost destroyed the concept of the album, as well as the easily shuffled playlists of the iPod functionality. Many popular music CDs have become singles oriented, with filler songs to pad the rest of the CD, so why would anyone willingly purchase them, given an alternative? With iTunes, users could spend four dollars to purchase the 'good' songs, as well as have money in their pockets for other music purchases. In the present retail climate, consumers have the ability to buy more music from an increased variety of artists and genres. Steve Jobs, when asked about his projection for physical music media, answered:

> "It'll go away. Eventually. I think burning CDs is passé already. Why would you burn a CD anymore? Just plug your iPod into your car! And I think the transition from portable CD players and all that stuff to iPods is going to

> happen in the next three to five years. The majority of the music in this country to be bough online will happen over the next six to eight years."[232]

The format war between the CD and the iPod differs from that of the Walkman and vinyl. The devices are similar, in that they are portable music players, but to say that they have incurred the same reactions and essentially perform the same tasks would be to deny much of the cultural influence and technological differences. The Walkman brought music to the individual in a way unlike previous devices, as people could plug into their personal world of music without letting anyone else in. Granted, Hosokawa argues that a community of those who own and listen to Walkmans in the public domain did take shape, but the iPod allows for a greater interconnectedness between the dichotomy of community and autonomy. The iPod, because it is a very small computer hard drive, allows one to transport one's entire music library, and plug it into almost any set of speakers to be enjoyed by the masses. One could, in theory, just remove the cassette from the Walkman and play it on a conventional player, but the iPod is more immediate. With tape, you are bound by its conventions, but with the iPod, you have the potential to play up to ten thousand songs at random.

Compared to the Walkman, the iPod is more immediate. If one were to create a mix-tape for the Walkman, it would take hours of careful selection and recording, in order to achieve the desired product, for a product that takes about 45 minutes to play. The iPod, on the other hand, in conjunction with a computer with iTunes,[233] can make almost instant playlists. iTunes can, if you desire, entirely remove the human factor in creating playlists; by merely selecting 'New Smart Playlist,' you can have a playlist as random or as prescribed as you wish, instantaneously. Playlists can also be very personalized, with length determined only by your hard drive's space.

iPodology

Currently, the state of research concerning the iPod is lacking in academic texts, with few scholarly works, and what has been written is generally an overview of the

[232] Levy, *The Perfect Thing*, 186-187.
[233] This is basically a moot point, though, because in order to have a normal functioning iPod it is assumed that you have a computer with iTunes. The computer is necessary to acquire the MP3 files, and to transfer them to the iPod.

device's history, or how it differs from similar devices. I believe that there needs to be extensive study on how the iPod is changing the world of music and how people interact with it. The iPod does not exist within a cultural vacuum, so it would be valuable to see how it is altering our cultural landscape. This type of research has been conducted on the Walkman, especially by Michael Bull in his book, *Sounding out the City*, but I feel that the society of Walkman's time and now are different, and deserve to be studied independently, but also linearly, to determine the similarities and distinctions.

Presently, the most important research conducted on the iPod and iPod culture has been undertaken by Michael Bull, as reported in various articles, and the book *Sound Moves*. Andrew Williams has also contributed to the field, to a lesser extent, with his book, *Portable Music and its Functions*. Here, Williams explored, through an empirical study, how users are engaged with portable music devices. He found that there were four primary functions: aestheticisation, environmental control, boundary demarcation and interpersonal mediation.[234] Williams describes these functions by noting that:

> In aestheticisation, listeners construct a unique perception of their surroundings, by combining them with portable music. In environmental control, listeners choose to replace external ambient sounds with portable music. In boundary demarcation, listeners use portable music to set them apart from their surroundings, especially when they consider those surroundings to be unpleasant. Finally, in interpersonal mediation, listeners use portable music to modify their personal interactions with people in their vicinity.[235]

William's categories all appear to focus on the management of soundscapes, and the relationships formed within those soundscapes, both between users and their music, and users and other people.

Williams also identified five ways in which users manage aspects of their own experiences with mobile playback devices. These include: company, aural mnemonic, mood management, time management and activation.[236] While these functions could, indeed, apply to mobile playback devices, it is interesting that they are closely related to the functions of music itself, as outlined in Part I of this thesis.

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[234] Andrew Williams, *Portable Music and its Functions* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).
[235] Ibid., 20.
[236] Ibid., 73.

It would seem, in this case, that the users are more focused on the music, rather than the device itself. The technology has become fairly invisible, in favour of a focus on the music being played upon it. While Williams' results are interesting, I also find it problematic that he was able to place his respondents into such succinct categories. His study also only interviewed less than 40 people, hardly enough to make generalisations about users.

Michael Bull's study, on the other hand, interviewed well over 5000 iPod users, gaining insight into both the mainstream users and aficionados. Bull is mainly concerned with the phenomenological aspects of the iPod, and how users utilize iPods to interact with their urban settings. For Bull, iPod culture is essentially an urban phenomenon, while I prefer to define it as an inclusive phenomenon. In my own research, no distinction was found between urban and rural users, in regards to time spent in use, and ownership. While urban and rural users may use their devices for different reasons, they are both, nevertheless, equally involved in the culture and usage.

Similar to the discussion by Schafer, in which headphones provide a sense of intimacy and power to create their own soundscape, Bull argues that iPod users can create their own soundworlds, by placing the power back in the hands of the listener. The listeners in Bull's empirical study found that:

> iPod user re-orientates and re-spatialises experience which users often describe in solipsistic and aesthetic terms. Users frequently mention feelings of calm gained through listening to their iPod, in which the street is often represented as a mere backcloth, having minimal significance to the user. iPod user functions to simplify the user's environment thus enabling them to focus more clearly on their own state of being precisely by minimizing the contingency of the street.[237]

Williams, Bull and my research found similar reasons as to why people listen to music, on any device, including: they can focus on their own thoughts, by blocking out extraneous sounds; they promote a clear space of thought where imagination becomes freer; and for mood management. The only iPod-specific function was that users felt they could bridge the space between home and street through mobile music.

[237] Bull, 'No Dead Air,' 348.

For Bull and his respondents, the iPod essentially 'warms up' the spaces of 'mobile habitation'[238]. Through the creation of a private soundworld, users can recollect on memories, manage moods, and focus on inner thoughts, without the distraction of the outside world. The user can 're-organise sounds of the city to his or her liking'[52]. While this viewpoint creates an image of the iPod user as a solitary being, isolated from the rest of society, encased in a bubble, Bull found that some respondents enjoyed watching the world from the protective shield the iPod provided. For others, the iPod was a way of distancing themselves from the outside world, while simultaneously providing a soundtrack to the events unfolding around them. They were thus involved in what was going on 'outside', but through an invisible shield. These users are interacting with their own medium, while fusing it with what's 'outside' to create their own inside-joke. What will be shown in my own results, in the following section, and more so in Chapter 3.2, is that iPods do not necessarily imply social isolation. For younger respondents, especially, the iPod is not an indicator to others that they do not desire social contact, as many digital youths see the iPod as an invitation for conversation, by merely asking what someone is listening to.

Methodologically, the iPod can be approached from either a purely technology standpoint, or sociologically. Bull's approach is quite phenomenological, using sociological quantitative methods. My own approach combines quantitative analysis with qualitative data from surveys. As with my chapters on music, and the internet, this method gives a sense of the narrative for iPod use, as well as being able to make generalizations about mainstream users. It is an approach which I find is quite useful and comprehensive.

Results

My data shows a high degree of involvement in iPod culture at the technological level. In total, 84.1% (n=1045) of respondents reported owning an iPod or MP3 player. There was also no significant difference between female and male ownership: in total, 86.4% (n=555) of males owned an MP3 player, while 81.5% of females (n=486) also claimed ownership. There is a complicated history surrounding male and female coded technologies, but it appears that the iPod is fairly gender

[238] Ibid., 352.

neutral when it comes to use. The gender differences, therefore, are more specific to the music being listened to on them, and the ways in which mobile music devices are used in social settings (as demonstrated in Chapter 3.2).

Interestingly, the data shows that there is a high rate of MP3 player ownership at all age levels. Throughout this thesis, a distinction has been made between digital youth (digital natives) and digital immigrants. It would follow that digital youth would be more likely to own an iPod or MP3 players as it is the technology which arguably defines their culture, but it appears that there are only slight differences in use across generations. Splitting the data into those under and over 30, we find that digital immigrants are less likely to own an MP3 player, but not significantly so. As can be seen in Table 36 below, 86.7% of those under 30 own MP3 players, as opposed to 79.7% of respondents over 30.

Table 36: MP3 Player Ownership: Split by Generation

Generation	Ownership	N	Percent
Younger	yes	678	86.70077
	no	75	9.590793
Older	yes	354	79.72973
	no	81	18.24324

To get further into this data, Table 37 shows these results, as broken down into decades:

Table 37: MP3 Player Ownership: Split by Decade

Age	Ownership	N	Percent
0-19	yes	242	85.51237
	no	22	7.773852
20-29	yes	436	87.37475
	no	53	10.62124
30-39	yes	204	82.92683
	no	36	14.63415
40-49	yes	94	81.03448
	no	19	16.37931
50-59	yes	49	74.24242
	no	17	25.75758
60-69	yes	7	50
	no	7	50
80-89	no	2	100

Table 37 shows that ownership increases with age until the 20s, and then gradually decreases. It is understandable that those in their 20s would have higher ownership rates than those younger, as they would have the financial means, as well as being firmly embedded in iPod culture and digitality.

More importantly, what are users *doing* with their mobile music devices, and how are they incorporating them into their daily lives? The survey contained an MP3 player activities section, which explored some of these issues. A variety of questions were asked, which respondents rated on a 5 point Likert-style scale of frequency. So as to not skew the data, these questions were only completed by respondents who had indicated that they owned an MP3 player. Table 38 shows the mean frequencies of participation for respondents, in descending order, for the entire group of respondents.

Table 38: MP3 Player Activities: Mean Frequency of Participation (total)

Activities	N	Mean Frequency
Use MP3 player/iPod while travelling	1026	4.426
Use MP3 player/iPod in general	1026	4.285
Listen to music on random setting on MP3 player/iPod	1023	3.591
Listen to albums in full on MP3 player/iPod	1024	3.351
Change music selection on MP3 player/iPod	1025	3.331
Listen to playlist on MP3 player/iPod	1023	3.323
Use MP3 player/iPod plugged into external speakers	1027	3.059
Make playlists on iTunes	1026	2.944
Create playlists for specific activities	1024	2.823
Create playlists for specific moods	1024	2.689
Use MP3 player/iPod while participating in sports	1025	2.545
Use MP3 player/iPod as storage device	1020	2.311
Listen to podcasts	1023	2.277
Make playlists "on the go"	1025	2.206

Just as there is a high rate of ownership, in regards to MP3 players, we also see a high rate of use. When asked how often they 'used an MP3 player/iPod in general', the total mean frequency, out of a maximum of 5, was 4.285. This indicates a high correlation between ownership and use. It is quite possible that people would own a device and not use them regularly, but that is not the case for the majority of respondents.

From this data, we can also see that these users are not using their iPods very often as a 'storage device' (m = 2.311), to 'listen to podcasts' (m = 2.277) or to make

playlists 'on-the-go' (m = 2.206)[239]. These results suggest that users are most likely using their MP3 players to listen to music, its primary function. What is interesting, however, is that users are listening to both full albums (m = 3.351) and the random setting (m = 3.591), in almost equal mean frequencies. Earlier, I had hypothesized that iPod culture and digitality promotes a singles-based culture, whereby people are more inclined to download specific tracks rather than full albums, and enjoy the juxtaposition of various styles that the shuffle function of the iPod promotes. Results suggest that young females, in particular, are more inclined to consume music in this way, but, when looking at the results without accounting for age or gender, there is an equal distribution. In order to delve deeper into this data, gender and age need to be accounted for.

Gender cannot be ignored in this study[240]. The history of gender and technology has traditionally situated technology, especially electronics and music, within the masculine realm[241]. Even the first home hi-fi stereos were seen as a way for males to control the domestic space. The interior of the home, traditionally defined as the woman's domain, could be re-masculinized by the stereo and the soundscape produced by the man's choice of music.[242] Control of the musical listening environment is synonymous with power, as music defines a situation in a behavioural sense.[243] The iPod gives this power back to the individual, which redefines social situations, communication and the balance of power. Technology, for women, has traditionally translated into time and labour saving devices that are

[239] Making playlists 'on-the-go' is an iPod-specific function. iPod allows users to make playlists on their iPod itself from songs already present on the device, as opposed to other MP3 players where one can only make playlists externally on a computer and then upload them to the device.
[240] Selected works that have guided my discussion on gender and technology: Linda Stepulevage, 'Gender/Technology Relations: Complicating the Gender Binary,' *Gender and Education* 13.3 (2001); Viswanath Venkatesh and Michael G. Morris, 'Why Don't Men Ever Ask for Directions?' *MIS Quarterly* 24.1 (2000); Gill Kirkup, Linda Janes, Kath Woodward and Fiona Hovenden, eds *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000); Flis Henwood, 'Exceptional Women? Gender and Technology in UK Higher Education,' *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine* (1999/2000).
[241] See also: Judy Wacjman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
[242] Timothy Taylor, *Strange Sounds: Music, Technology, and Culture* (New York; London: Routledge, 2001).
[243] Richard Leppert, 'Desire, Power, and the Sonoric Landscape: Early Modernism and the Politics of Musical Privacy,' in *The Place of Music*, eds. Andrew Leyshon, David Matless and George Revill (New York: Guildford Press, 1998): 291-321.

easily incorporated into daily life, requiring little to no effort.[244] The iPod confuses and raises questions about the solidity of these boundaries. It is a highly technologically advanced piece of hardware, which stereotypically would place it within the masculine domain; but also beautifully designed, with little area for 'tweaking', thereby also placing it within the feminine domain. The iPod, and its culture, could be seen as the marker for a balancing, or androgenization of gender and technology.

An ANOVA test was conducted on the same activities from Table 38, in order to see if males and females were using their devices in statistically significant ways. Table 39 presents the results, in descending order, for those with a significance level of 0.02 or greater.

Table 39: ANOVA Results: Gender and MP3 Player Activities

Activities	Sig.	Gender
Listen to podcasts	1.04E-09	male
Create playlists for specific moods	1.42E-09	female
Listen to playlist on MP3 player/iPod	6.46E-07	female
Create playlists for specific activities	1.75E-06	female
Listen to music on random setting on MP3 player/iPod	1.80E-06	female
Use MP3 player/iPod while participating in sports	2.90E-06	female
Listen to albums in full on MP3 player/iPod	3.33E-05	male
Make playlists "on the go"	0.002674	female
Make playlists on iTunes	0.002792	female

As with the results discussed in Part I, we find that females are using their music, and consequently music technologies, in order to foster a more social relationship with music, more so than males. This is not to say that males are not using the devices in this way, but that females show significantly *more* use in this fashion. As shown in Table 39, females are statistically more likely than males to 'create playlists for specific moods' (Sig. = 1.41E-09), and 'activities' (Sig. = 6.46E-

[244] Wiebe Bijker, *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs: Toward a Theory of Sociotechnical Change* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1995.

07). Females appear to desire more control over their listening environment and experience, by 'listening to playlists', 'using MP3 players while participating in sports' and making playlists, in general. Males, on the other hand, demonstrate a more traditionally stereotypical male approach to music consumption, by using their MP3 players to listen to albums in full as opposed to random shuffle, and to listen to podcasts. In other words, although the iPod appears to be gender neutral, in that it is neither overly technical (masculine) or overly soft (feminine), gender stereotypes are imposed by users onto the devices through use. Males are more focused on the technical functions of the device, while females are more focused on combining it with sociability and mood management.

Also of importance is how different age groups adopt and utilize the technology. While there is no major difference in ownership with regards to age, perhaps there are different functions for use. The results of an ANOVA test, to determine differences in use between digital natives and digital immigrants, are as follows:

Table 40: ANOVA Results: Generation / MP3 Player Activities

Activities	Sig.	Generation
Listen to podcasts	9.41E-16	older
Create playlists for specific moods	1.55E-07	younger
Make playlists "on the go"	1.02E-06	younger
Use MP3 player/iPod while participating in sports	1.50E-05	younger
Create playlists for specific activities	0.001629	younger
Make playlists on iTunes	0.002524	younger
Use MP3 player/iPod while travelling	0.005054	younger
Listen to music on random setting on MP3 player/iPod	0.008084	younger
Listen to playlist on MP3 player/iPod	0.01316	younger

The most significant and striking result is the difference between digital immigrants and youth in relation to the amount of time spent listening to podcasts on iPods. The older generations are *much* more likely to use iPods in this fashion, with

a quantifiably high, statistically significant difference of 9.405E-16. Although iPod's primary function is music listening, podcasts have become an important arena for news, information, etc. It could be suggested that, for older users, podcasts are a form of transference of previous activities to new technologies. Instead of receiving news from television, radio, or print sources, these users are able to download podcasts, taking the news with them to listen at their own convenience. Digital youth, in contrast, were more focused on altering their personal soundscapes musically, mostly through playlists, as constructed on their computers, for specific moods and/or activities, or by making playlists 'on-the-go'.

While the quantitative data has shown what people are doing with their MP3 players, the qualitative results focus on *where* people are using iPods and MP3 players, by responding to the statement: *I only use my iPod when walking to and from work*. Generally, using an MP3 player while walking was a popular activity choice, but the majority of users added other activities to this statement, as well. There were only a few respondents who stated that they only used their iPods in one specific environment, while most noted a variety of ways, and a minority did not use iPods at all, and elaborated why. For those who *did* use iPods in their daily lives, their responses can be grouped into mobile, immobile, and quasi-mobile activities, which will be discussed below. First, the reasons why people did not use iPods while walking, or just in general, will be discussed.

As there were very few respondents who did not own or use an iPod, it is difficult to categorize their reasons. That being said, two main reasons emerged: (1) preference for ambient noise/silence when outside, and (2) a dislike of being distracted outside as it could be dangerous. These are fairly straightforward distinctions. As for the former, they preferred the noises of the 'natural' soundscape to that of a personalized sound bubble, such as the sounds of nature, silence, or to have conversations with others if they were not walking alone. In their own words:

> **Male/38/London, UK:** I never use my iPod when I'm walking – I enjoy the ambient sound of the street.

> **Male/36/Edinburgh, UK:** I cycle so I don't listen to it then. I use it on long car journeys of when going by place or train, although if I'm going somewhere new I always like to listen to my environment instead.

Male/35/New Zealand: I use my iPod at work, the gym, on public transport. I tend not to use it when I am walking so that I can hear peripheral sounds.

Male/44/St. Catharines, Canada: nope. In fact, I rarely use it while walking…When I walk, it's usually with my family and I rather like listening to what they have to say.

Female/54/Burns Lake, Canada: I personally like to hear nature when walking, so don't have an iPod.

Male/24/Austin, USA: I walk to school every day and I prefer silence/ambient noise. Car trips are the main time I use my iPod.

For those who find walking with an iPod could possibly distract them, and potentially cause them bodily harm, it is interesting to note that a study has been conducted, which suggests that in comparison to walkers who use mobile phones, or no mobile devices at all, iPod users were the least likely to be hit by a car when crossing the street. The logic behind this is that walkers on mobile phones are distracted beyond hope, walkers with no devices are the base level of distracted, whereas iPod users are more aware of their self-imposed distractions, and are therefore *more* aware of their surroundings.[245] On the other hand, the following respondents did not want to take that chance:

Female/24/Edinburgh, UK: I don't have an iPod but I wouldn't use it in that way, too dangerous on the bike/walking for traffic noises.

Male/36/Edinburgh, UK: I don't walk to work, I cycle. It is dangerous to listen to music whilst cycling.

Female/26/Washington DC, USA: I rarely use my iPod walking around – I find it annoying to be that disconnected to what's going on around me – and the risk of getting hit by cars the greater.

Male/49/Ottawa, Canada: No, because it distracts me too much and I walk in front of traffic.

The potential to damage one's hearing was only noted as a cause for concern by one respondent:

Female/27/Montreal, Canada: I don't own an iPod, exactly because of this reason: it wouldn't be necessary in my lifestyle. I work at home, I don't like to

[245] Jack Nasar, Peter Hecht, and Richard Wener, 'Mobile Telephones, Distracted Attention, and Pedestrian Safety,' *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 40.1 (2008): 69-75.

> listen to music in the subway (the subway itself is too noisy, I would have to crank up the volume, and I wouldn't like to be deaf by 35, you know?), and I don't use my portable CD player that much anyways. I listen to music at home (and I'm constantly at home), mostly through my iTunes library.

Returning to the three situations in which iPod users noted how they used their devices; mobile iPod activities are when the iPod is used for its intended design. These are the also the instances that Bull focuses on in his study, which are: in transit from one space to another; and bridging the gap between home and the street through a personalized soundscape. My interview responses concurred with Bull's observations. While in transit, users are freely moving around, accompanied by their music, or podcasts. A variety of mobile activities are seen to accompany iPod use, such as: traveling and commuting in general; biking; walking; and while on planes, buses, trains or other forms of public transport. Responses included:

> **Male/29/Edinburgh, UK**: I only use my iPod when on the train, whether commuting to/from work or traveling generally.

> **Female/26/Prince George, Canada:** I plug in my iPod to my vehicle and listen to it…while driving to/from work

> **Male/46/North Shields, UK:** I do use my iPod when commuting, both on public transport and during the walk at either end of the journey. During my commute I tend to listen to podcasts more than music on the way to work, whereas on the way back home the split is more like 50/50. If I've had a lousy day I'm more likely to listen to music on the way home, in order to lighten the mood a bit.

> **Male/26/Vancouver, Canada:** I think more broadly I use my iPod when I am en route to somewhere, whether walking, transiting, or (when I had a car) plugged in to my stereo of my car.

> **Male/47/St. Catharines, Canada:** I use it mostly when I'm biking to and from work, and sometimes when I'm riding transit to and from work.

Even though the iPod is essentially a mobile device, a variety of ways to use iPods while not 'in transit' emerged. I call these the 'immobile' reasons, not to imply that the users are devoid of movement, but that the device, itself, does not move around. In these immobile activities, the iPod can either be plugged into external speakers, an external docking station, or used in a work setting where the user sits at a desk for long periods of time. A small group of respondents also noted

that they use their iPods at night while falling asleep. As with all these categories, though, they are not mutually exclusive. It is not likely that users *only* listen to their iPods when falling asleep, or while walking, but rather, tend to use their iPods in a variety of situations, both mobile and immobile:

> **Male/26/Glasgow, UK:** I listen to it on my way to work but also at a lot of other times. I use it when I go shopping and before bed.
>
> **Male/36/London:** I usually have to listen to something just before I go to sleep.
>
> **Male/33/Tallil, Iraq:** I use my iPod indoors, when I have free time just to listen to music – and very often just before I go to sleep.
>
> **Female/26/Ottawa, Canada:** I also bring it with me to friends' houses and plug it in to speakers
>
> **Female/40/Los Angeles, USA:** I'm a graphic designer, I use it when I want to get some work done… I have a very large, dead-line oriented job and work in an office with many people who have much more time to sit around and gossip. When the gossip gets a little much and I want to focus, I turn the volume up. Not just to drown out the noise, but they often get the hint that it's time to get back to work! Lol

The final instance in which people tend to use their iPods quite frequently is during what I call 'quasi-mobile' activities, or more specifically, during exercise, mostly at a gym. In this scenario, users are mobile, in that they are 'moving' about, but usually in a confined space. They are not in transit, but are, nonetheless, mobile. Using iPods at the gym was a fairly common activity amongst respondents:

> **Male/37/Bowling Green, USA:** Actually, [I use it] only when exercising. I don't find it worthwhile just going from the parking lot to my office. I need at least 2 songs worth of distance.
>
> **Female/36/Raleigh, USA:** I generally only use my iPod when driving to and from work or while working out at the gym. I rarely use it any other time.
>
> **Male/49/Oattawa, USA:** I use it to exercise.
>
> **Male/43/New Hampshire, USA:** I use my iPod (iTouch) when riding the exercise bike or sitting in the sauna at the gym. I also use it in my car, playing it through the cassette player.

These interviews have shown *where* users are using their iPods, but unfortunately, it neglects the question of *why*, as it was not put forth. One could

assume that it's for the same reasons that they listen to music – to pass the time, mood management, etc. A few respondents, however, did mention specific reasons, which gives us a small insight into the meaning behind the use. As with reasons for listening to music, a few respondents mentioned it helps pass the time:

> **Male/27/Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:** I use my MP3 player when I want to pass the time by, be it going to and from work, or walking around town running errands. I occasionally use my MP3 player while in a car with others on longer trips, usually when we all just want some time to relax.

While for others, it presented an opportunity to listen intently to music:

> **Male/33/Tallil, Iraq:** I use my iPod indoors, when I have free time just to listen to music…I listen intently and focus on just the music. I guess I don't really multi-task with the iPod much at all.

> **Male/24/Australia:** I get the most use of my iPod when I'm walking into town, or taking the bus in, as this is what I frequently do with my time off. My work involved a lot of driving. I would buy an iPod adapter for the car, but I enjoy listening to the radio to discover new music and keep my iPod for the evenings and traveling during my free time. I only have a small iPod (first generation nano, 2GB), but it's got enough music that I'm constantly finding stuff I haven't listened to for months. I'll listen to a group of three or four albums repetitively for a month of so, interspersed with whatever random songs I've stuffed in the cracks, gradually dropping one album and picking up another, so that I work my way through the whole lot with time. I'll drop an album when I've heard it too much, but the repetitive listening often reveals little nuances I'd missed before and familiarity with my favourite album of the moment lets me enjoy it more.

For a few respondents, the new technology was easier to use, and therefore preferable to older versions, such as CDs:

> **Female/32/Aberystwyth, Wales:** The changes in my listening afforded by the iPod are to do with a) the fact that it contains *all* of my music at once, so I don't need to choose a particular CD to take with me (i.e. I can change what I'm listening to whenever I feel like it!), and b) I can group things together easily, using the playlist function, without having to make mixtapes/mix-CDs etc. I probably listen to more music now than when I didn't have an iPod, mainly because I can just stick it on 'shuffle' and be certain I'll get something I like, rather than having to sort through CDs – often I would want to listen to one or two tracks off one CD, then some off another, etc, but wouldn't want to be getting up to change all the time. I like that I can get at a fairly random selection of know-that-I'll-like-them songs, and sometimes it throws out a long-forgotten favourite which is always nice.

Also, as with music, the iPod can become an addiction; people want to have their music with them at all times, and feel a sense of loss when it's not around. Similarly, these respondents felt very attached to their iPods, to the point of addiction:

> **Male/22/New York City, USA:** I love my iPod and couldn't live without it! I think Apple's done such an amazing job with a product like the iPod that if mine broke today, I'd immediately go out and buy another one; it's almost like a drug in that it's totally changed my life and how I listen to music. Have my entire music collection in the palm of my hand is an incredible thing.

> **Female/19/Missouri, USA:** My iPod is named Jude. He is a black, 30 gig, third generation iPod video. I treat him like he's a person… Some people think that's strange, but oh well. I cannot stand it when I don't know where he is. He is always in my hand, plugged into my computer, or in my pocket. One time when I unplugged him from my computer, everything got wiped out. I almost cried. Okay, I did cry. But it's fixed now. Hmm… Jude has 1445 songs, 2 full length movies, 2 movie trailers, and 1 game. I'm very particular about how songs go on Jude. Song title, artist, and genre. No more, no less. And we always sort by artist, never by song title. My top 25 most listened to has 22 Theory Of A Deadman songs and 3 Taylor Swift songs. If anyone touches Jude without my permission, they get dirty looks. I am very protective. Jude does not stay in the car for extended periods of time. I get really nervous about him overheating or getting too cold. When I'm done here, I'm adding 5 more songs to him. As you can probably tell, I'm very attached to him.

> **Female/15/Orlando, USA:** I use my iPod whenever I can. I've almost always got headphones on. Other than the fact that I'm mildly addicted to it, nope. :]

It was definitely the younger respondents, the digital youth, who tended to have a more involved, and addictive-type relationship to their iPods.

***

This section has examined the *why* and *how* of iPod-type devices. It has been demonstrated that iPod use is, indeed, a cross-generational experience, with actual use of the device being seen in almost all respondents. Where different age groups differ, however, is in their uses of the device, and, as will be explored in the next chapter, how they incorporate the technology into their human-to-human relationships. The iPod fosters a relationship with music that can then extend to relationships with others.

3.2: IPOD CULTURE AND IDIOSOCIABILITY

The previous chapter examined iPod culture, and how the mainstream public was using the technology itself. This chapter will look at the concept of a new sociability being developed within iPod culture. As previously stated, iPod culture should be viewed as encompassing digitality, both the culture and social norms. It is not solely *because* of the technology that people have developed new social taboos and ways of interacting, but it has been a motivating factor in initiating and shaping those changes. While critiques have argued that mobile technologies, such as the iPod, are making people less social, I would argue that the interpretation of sociability is changing, something which I refer to as the idiosociability of society. This changing notion of sociability began with digital youth, or digital natives and, as will be demonstrated with qualitative research, is quickly becoming the social norm for all age groups.

This chapter will begin with an examination of previous literature on the social processes and impacts of technology, while acknowledging that there is currently no approach which adequately applies to the study of iPod culture. The concept of idiosociability will be explored – how people are different socially and how much of this is from the influence of technology. Finally, this chapter will investigate the public's perception of the social impact of iPod technology, through personal narratives and subjective generalisations.

Technology and Society: a review of the literature

Historically, technology studies have sought to examine how technology and society coexist – whether one impacts the other, or if it is a symbiotic relationship. The majority of the current studies attempt to distance themselves from technical determinism[246]. Because digitality is also rooted in the social, finding a meaningful approach is important, but also fraught with problems. The socio-technological approach, or the social construction of technology, does not always lend itself to an understanding of the technological impacts, for example. As will be discussed,

[246] Wiebe Bijker, Tomas Hughes and Trevor Pinch, eds., *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 1987)

Sterne argues for an adoption of Bourdieu's theories to technology, which is an approach I am sympathetic to.

The history and theories behind the various approaches have been cited in numerous sources, to varying degrees of success, so will not be recounted in detail here. These include: social constructivism (SCOT), the social shaping of technology (SST), the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), and the actor network theory (ANT). Most important, and relevant to this study, would be the SCOT theory. Before exploring its relevance, however, I will quickly summarise the main arguments for the other approaches, and how they are not suitable for the study of digitality and iPod culture.

The actor-network theory (ANT), as promoted by Callon, Latour and Law, is quite similar to the SCOT theory, in that it opposes technological determinism and begins to expose the fallacy of construing technology and society as separate fields, as they influence each other. Technology was created in a particular society, and much like the arts, helps us to understand it. For ANT theorists, technology is what makes society possible, so, is included in its functionality. Where ANT differs from SCOT is in its argument that, just as humans exhibit agency, so does the technology. In other words, 'their most controversial idea [is that] we cannot deny *a priori* that non-human actors or "actants" can have agency'[247], which, as noted by Judy Wacjman, 'has helped us to understand the role of technology in producing social life'[248]. While I, too, find this approach useful, in that it acknowledges technology's relationship to society, where I differ is in providing agency to technology. The technology may *promote* individualised uses and subjective meanings for its users[249], but I cannot argue for the agency of the technology itself.

Also, primarily in opposition to technological determinism, SST emerged as an approach which focuses on the *content* of technologies, and how this relates to a range of social factors: economic, political, organizational, and cultural. Formed in the mid-1990s, scholars of this theory were brought together 'by an insistence that the "black-box" of technology must be opened, to allow the socio-economic pattern

[247] Judy Wacjman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991): 451.
[248] Ibid., 451.
[249] Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch, eds., *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technology* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2003)

embedded in both the *content of technologies,* and the *process of innovation* to be exposed and analysed'[250]. The metaphor of the 'black box' comes up quite often in the history of technology studies, most notably by SCOT theorists, as a call for others to consider the social in the technology. It is a metaphor for unpacking technology, to examine its inner workings, processes and impacts, which were previously not explored in technologically deterministic studies. As noted by Langdon Winner:

> The term *black box* in both technical and social science parlance is a device or system that, for convenience, is described solely in terms of its inputs and outputs. One need not understand anything about what goes on inside such black boxes. One simply brackets them as instruments that perform certain valuable functions.[251]

I agree that technology is not a 'black box.' We must consider it within the society it was created, but also its social impacts, something which the SST theory strives to acknowledge.

SST essentially explores the complex relationship between technology and society, by focusing on the 'choices' that are made in both the design of technology, but also in its reception, or consumption patterns. In other words, SST explores the 'trajectory' of technology from design to social impact. As Williams and Edge reflect:

> SST studies show that technology does not develop according to an inner technical logic but is instead a social product, patterned by the conditions of its creation and use. Every stage in the generation and implementation of new technologies involved a set of choices between different technical options. Alongside narrowly "technical" considerations, a range of "social" factors affect which options are selected – thus influencing the context of technologies, and their social implications.[252]

While I am keen to examine the trajectory of technologies in culture and society and their socio-economic relationships, this approach, like others, seems to focus on technologies as only physical objects. While this is useful in the examination of mobile MP3 players, in particular within digitality, it becomes difficult to examine less physically oriented technologies, such as the internet, or,

[250] Robin Williams and David Edge, 'The Social Shaping of Technology,' *Research Policy* 25.6 (1996): 866.
[251] Langdon Winner, 'Upon Opening the Black Box and Finding it Empty: Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Technology,' *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 18.3 (1993): 365.
[252] Williams and Edge, 'The Social Shaping of Technology,' 866.

more specifically, Web 2.0. It could be argued that Web 2.0 is more of a concept than a technology, but it is a concept which contains various forms of technology, some of which are physically present on a computer screen, while others are in binary code, yet another technology. It would be interesting to develop the SST, in order to effectively include non-physical technologies, as they will continue to evolve and have great influence over society, while simultaneously being created *by* society. The Web 2.0, in particular, as a technological concept, is deeply rooted in our culture and sense of sociability. Just as SST and SCOT promote a non-linear approach to technology, a non-physical approach would also be beneficial.

As noted above, the most relevant approach when considering the established approaches to the sociological study of technology, is the social constructivist, or SCOT theory. The principle scholars, Bijker, Law and Pinch, primarily developed this theory as a reaction to technological determinism. They, along with others that followed, wanted to acknowledge the social in technologies, as well as how technologies, themselves, mirror societies. It is an approach that inspires exploration; instead of taking the technologies we use on a daily basis for granted, it encourages us to look deeper, to examine their creation and functions, in order to ultimately tell us more about ourselves. In other words, it is an approach to open the 'black box' in order to see its inner workings. Although, as Bijker and Law argue, it is natural for the general public not to question everyday technologies and their development, for it would occupy too much thought and time. Technologies work best when they are seamlessly integrated into society and everyday use. In their own words:

> In one sense, our lack of curiosity makes perfect sense. If we stopped to think why our artefacts – our saucepans, our cars, our refrigerators, our bridges – work or take the form that they do, we would never get around to boiling the water to make coffee each morning.[253]

This is not to imply that only technologies that are easily incorporated into society should be studied, or vice versa; SCOT theorists are keen to explore the technological workings of any technology, from those that have failed to the extremely successful. Traditionally, there has been a focus on technologies at the

[253] Wiebe Bijker and John Law, 'General Introduction,' in *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change,* eds. Bijker and Law (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992): 2.

extreme ends of the spectrum without an acknowledgement of the mundane, or everyday. SCOT theorists maintain that their approach can apply to any technology, providing it with a non-linear narrative, rooted in the society in which it was created and consumed. Bijker and Law argue that *all* technologies are shaped by and mirror society, and there is essentially no difference between the successes and failures, in this respect. The importance lies in the choices that are made, which can be found at all levels of the narrative, from design, to implementation and usage.[254] Through an understanding of the technological narrative, one acquires a deeper understanding of social processes, or how society is organised. 'Understanding these processes might help us to create different or better technologies. Understanding them would allow us to see that our technologies do not necessarily have to be the way they actually are'[255]. Society, as with technology, are human constructs.

While I find the SCOT approach quite useful to the study of digitality and iPod culture, in that it defines technology and knowledge within human constructionism, where the approach falls flat is in its implementation. Bijker and Pinch, in particular, provide a strict framework for analysing technologies, tracing their development and examining the multiple dimensions the technology *could have* occupied. But, even with its emphasis on the social in the technology, the approach fails to examine technological impacts, or 'consequences', as Winner refers to them. If the technology was influenced by the society that created it, then how does technology affect the society? In an effort to remove themselves entirely from technological determinism, the social effects of technology have almost entirely been eliminated from the SCOT theory.

Winner has also criticised the SCOT theory. While he finds the approach valuable in providing a conceptual framework to examine technologies, he is also 'struck by the narrowness of this perspective'[256]. He continues, 'advances along this line of inquiry take place at a significant cost: willingness to disregard important information about technology and human experience, questions very much alive in other theoretical approaches'[257]. What Winner and I feel is left out of this approach

[254] Ibid., 2.
[255] Ibid., 4.
[256] Winner, 'Upon Opening the Black Box and Finding it Empty,' 367.
[257] Ibid., 367-368.

are the *social* consequences. This approach does not study what new technologies mean to users and their sense of self, how they affect communities and quality of life, or issues of the distribution of power in society. The SCOT theory focuses on the story of origins, instead of consequences. Winner notes the irony of this – a sociological approach to technology that ignores the social.

For the purpose of this study, I am not concerned with how digitality and mobile music devices have developed. Their creation has been traced and explored by various scholars and writers. The story that is left to tell is their impacts – how they are integrated into society, how society is forming relationships with the technology, and finally, how these relationships affect human-to-human interactions. As has been argued, no established approach to technology can adequately answer these questions. More recently, scholars have moved past these established approaches to study individual technologies with personalised approaches, thereby treating each technology as its own identity, or genus. In this way, social impacts are easily incorporated into their approaches, as they are never defined. I find that this methodology has fared well in this thesis as well. Without the top-down imposition of theory onto data, the narrative of digitality and its culture has been granted a voice. Social theories may influence and guide discussions, but cannot be considered definitive and all-encompassing.

Similarly, Sterne has called for the inclusion of social reflexivity in the examination of technology. Although he noted that Bourdieu has never out-rightly discussed technology in his works, Sterne finds that Bourdieu's theories are 'technology friendly' and would be useful to include in its study. In altering Bourdieu's theories to technology, Sterne argues that 'technologies are essentially subsets of habitus'[258]. In this sense, we can approach the study of technology in the same manner as that of society. In Sterne's words:

> In this way, technologies are theoretically unexceptional. They are very similar to other ways in which we organise social practice through the habitus. This alternative to approaches that exceptionalize technology allows us to do away with the yawning gap between "technology" and "society" that has animated so many social theories of technology.[259]

[258] Jonathan Sterne, 'Boudieu, Technique and Technology,' *Cultural Studies* 17.3/4 (2003): 370.
[259] Ibid., 370.

For Sterne, technology becomes another social process, but contained in a technical form. These processes alter the behaviours and everyday lives of users in various ways, which can be visualised and analysed. Just as I argue for the social study of digitality as a conceptual technology, Sterne imagines a 'whole field that contained the totality of a society's technological practices, where technological production and consumption would come together'[260].

Individual Approaches to Mobile Digital Technology

Although perhaps not directly influenced by Sterne, a number of scholars have since utilised an individualised approach to the study of digital mobile technologies, most notably Katz, and his notions of *perpetual contact* and *apparatgeist* theory. Before Katz, however, Steven Johnson conducted an interesting study on interface culture, in order to examine how it was changing culture and communication methods.

Johnsons's *Interface Culture* (1997) strove to define the social in interface. Instead of separating technology and society, he proposed a joint approach, which he termed 'technoculture'. His informative examination, which is important to the study of digitality, defines technology as the fusion of art and technology in interface design. For Johnson, interface is the key to understanding our relationship to digital technologies.[261]

Johnson's theory is especially important for the social examination of conceptual technologies, such as the internet and Web 2.0. For these technologies, the interface is the physical representation of the technology or, the face of the technology. It could mean various things, such as web browsers, downloading sites, social networking sites, internet radio, etc; the interface guides us through the technology and our relationships with it. The internet is basically a set of binary codes, 1s and 0s, and the interface provides an image of these numbers that we can understand and form relationships with. While we have discussed the internet as an invisible technology, in regards to digital youth, in that they do not see the process behind the media, it is an unrecognisable organisation of numbers, made visible by interface.[262]

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[260] Ibid., 383.
[261] Steven Johnson, *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate* (New York: Basic Books, 1997): 4.
[262] Ibid., 19.

For Johnson, how this is affecting culture and communication is of utmost importance for research. As the meeting point between humans and technologies, interface is changed by, and changes with human interaction. In this sense, it is like any other technology, or human construct.

Expanding on Johnson's technocultural approach to technology, Katz has provided a number of terms to help understand this concept. While Johnson focused on the design elements of interface, and how they affect communication and cultural production, Katz has done extensive research on mobile devices, such as phones, and their integration into society and human relationships. Of importance to iPod culture and digitality are his terms, 'perpetual contact' and 'apparatgeist theory'.

Coined in 2002, apparatgeist theory defines Katz's approach to technology studies. He does not explicitly define apparatgeist as a theoretical approach, but as a lens through in which we can examine technology. It is a combination of 'apparatus', or mechanism, and 'geist', meaning spirit. Katz notes that the term is not intended to imply that technologies have spirits, but rather that they can represent the spirit of the times. For example, Katz argues that the mobile phone captures the spirit of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, while I have similarly noted that the iPod captures the spirit of iPod culture, and contemporary digital youth, in particular. Apparatgeist theory focuses on the users and how they construct meaning with technologies, whether or not they use them. Just as the SCOT approach acknowledges that users construct different meanings depending on the technology, Katz recognizes that non-users construct their own meanings as well. I find this applies to iPod culture, because I am not concerned only with those who use iPods or other Web 2.0 processes, such as social networking sites, but also non-users and their reasons. iPod culture affects everyone, regardless of how much they are involved. In summary of apparatgeist theory, Katz defines it as:

> A lens that attempts to explain communication that is both mediated through personal technologies and also the meaning-making that surrounds the communication device itself.[263]

In considering iPod culture, and iPods specifically, through the apparatgeist lens, we can describe the way in which users incorporate the technology into their

[263] James E. Katz, *Magic in the Air: Mobile Communication and the Transformation of Social Life* (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Transaction Publishers, 2006): 9.

lives, and their interactions with other users, as well as non-users. It helps us determine *where*, *why*, and *how* people are using devices, and *why* non-users may, or may not choose to engage in iPod culture. In Chapter 3.1, a narrative was used to demonstrate that people were using their devices while in transit, in order to create a personalised sound bubble, and help pass the time. For some, it allowed for a stronger relationship to their music, while for others, it was a motivational tool whilst exercising. Non-users provided a variety of reasons for why they did not own an MP3 player, or iPod specifically, from financial to sound quality to a desire to enjoy the sounds of nature over those of music. Within the environment that users and non-users exist, sociability develops. When a new technology is introduced into either the human-to-human, or human-to-music relationship, new social techniques must be negotiated, with the aim of finding a harmonious relationship. As will be discussed in the results section, the isolation mobile music players have been perceived as promoting is becoming anything but isolating. For digital youth, especially, they are perceived as an invitation for engagement. The devices are altering established social taboos and norms, to allow for a new style of communication and multitasking. As I have noted throughout this thesis, as social beings we will continue to develop our communication skills. iPod culture is not making people any less social towards one another; if anything it is promoting a new sociability.

Katz's term, 'perpetual contact,' is a subset of this new sociability, in that it defines one of the ways in which people are differently social, but not less so. Katz, to define an unattainable ideal for communication, coined the term, 'to suggest the aim of pure communication, that people often strive for, the melding, as it were, of minds'[264]. Katz explores this concept as it relates to mobile phones, but it could easily be applied to other digital technologies. Ironically, since Katz coined the term, mobiles have become increasingly important and definitive of the concept of perpetual contact. Technological convergence has seen the development of mobile phones that encapsulate not only the ability to communicate via speech or text (SMS), but are increasingly able to play music, and access the internet and social networking sites. Perpetual contact has never been more relevant – various forms of

[264] Ibid., 9.

social interaction can be achieved via the mobile phone, while removed from the physical presence of the other in the conversation. That is not to say that people are less engaged in real world communication, as these devices are readily used to promote and facilitate social engagement. This form of sociability is fluid and spontaneous, but sometimes not reliable. What this technology *does* do, however, is provide new possibilities in communication. As Katz notes, technology does not prescribe use, it puts constraints on infinite possibilities[265].

Idiosociability

In consideration of perpetual contact and apparatgeist theory, I propose another term that would encapsulate both, while also acknowledging the plurality of sociability made possible in iPod culture: idiosocial. By applying the prefix 'idio' to social, we can identify the multiple ways in which people are capable of being social and, implicit in this definition, the role of technology in shaping these relationships.

By no means am I implying that prior to iPod culture and digitality there was only one way to be social, but I argue that a new term is needed to distinguish digital technology's influence on current modes of sociability, from the past. The digital technology discussed throughout this thesis promotes social interaction, while at the same time reflecting and influencing identity formation, through the lens of taste, whether musical or otherwise. Idiosocial is used to identify the individual narrative in social interaction; it recognizes the role of the individual, whether user or non-user, and their interactions with each other, and with technology.

While encompassing the apparatgeist theory and its focus on the users, the concept of idiosocial also takes from the SCOT theory, and Sterne's utilisation of Bourdieu's theory of technology as habitus. By considering technology as a social construct, it is included in the examination of social relationships without being considered a separate entity. Technology becomes another agent in the relationship. Social interactions, therefore, are not defined by the technology, but the technology is considered an equal partner.

The question then becomes, how is sociability perceived by the general public? Do people generally find MP3 devices to be isolating and promoting a culture of 'alone togetherness,' or have they become so adopted into everyday life

[265] James E. Katz and Mark Aakhus, *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 307.

that they are, for the purpose at hand, invisible? The next section will explore these questions through qualitative research, by way of interviews to: construct a narrative of idiosociability in iPod culture; look at generational and gender differences, where applicable; and define the personal in the narrative.

Results

The concept of sociability in iPod culture will be explored primarily through qualitative data. The survey, unfortunately, did not contain any questions related to the social nature of the culture, or the technology specifically. This concept was, however, raised in the online interview, as well as the in-person interviews conducted with high school aged youth.

The people interviewed generally paint a complex picture of the interaction between society, technology and the relationships formed in digitality. While trends emerged, there was, by no means, any straightforward, mainstream way of understanding sociability and mobile MP3 players. The concept of idiosociability can be considered very much a product of digitality, in this sense. People are developing unique and distinct relationships and interactions with new technologies. For now, there does not appear to be one stream that could be considered the forerunner for future developments, so this is an interesting time to document, as future research will look back and see what led to the normative 'way of being'. In this sense, these results are very interesting from a SCOT approach, in that it is documenting choices. Where the discussion differs, however, is not in documenting choices of technological development or acceptance, but of social etiquette and behavioural taboos.

What will be shown, however, is that although there is a multiplicity of ways of being social and engaging in iPod culture, high school aged youth, the youngest respondents, have a much more structured and homogenous view of sociability than older generations. It could be hypothesized that their actions will eventually filter up to become standard, but that has yet to be seen. Changing social taboos appear to be originating with youth, those with the highest level of engagement with these technologies; but will their views become the norm, as youth have traditionally defined new sociabilities and norms, or will idiosociability rule, promoting a society where social norms are dismissed in favour of a personalised approach to social

etiquette? Throughout this thesis, I have argued that digitality promotes a culture of eclecticism, where people are free to explore aspects of their personality through different musical styles without aligning their personalities with particular genres, and discovering new ways of communicating, via social networking sites and mobile technology. Social norms tend to have a cultural component, so how are they affected in an eclectic, or individualistic society? While one person finds mobile phones and iPods anti-social, another believes they are an intensely meaningful form of communication and way to bond over shared experiences. This is not a debate to make value judgments, that one way of being social is better than another, just that it is important to acknowledge the validity of different ways of being and interacting.

The statement used in the online interview to explore these issues was: *MP3 players and iPods are making people more antisocial. I use my iPod to ignore others and find it rude when people talk to me with their headphones still in.* It could be noted that responses were quite varied because this statement covers a variety of topics within the theme of sociability; most respondents reported similar issues, but from differing standpoints. Most responses focus on varying perceptions of rudeness and iPod use, as well as providing their own position on technological etiquette: i.e. when, where and how it was appropriate to wear headphones in public spaces.

I have broken the responses down into four main categories, each with a variety of sub-categories. These categories, of course, are not mutually exclusive – a number of responses fall into multiple categories, or place conditions on their responses. For example, respondents would say they found it rude for people to engage in conversation with headphones on, but then quanlify it with a selection of instances where it would not be rude; or say they considered it rude, but they do it all the time anyways. The first two categories are concerned with the perceived rudeness of people conversing with headphones in their ears: (A) people who generally find it rude when people talk to them with their headphones still in, and (B) those who don't find it particularly annoying when people have their headphones in during conversations, unless in particular circumstances. The last two categories concern the social function of iPods: (C) respondents who used headphones to establish 'me' time/space, and (D) those who felt that iPods could indeed be used as social tools.

(A) Conversing with headphones: rude

A large majority of respondents agreed with the part of the statement, *I find it rude when people talk to me with their headphones still in*. While social taboos are evolving when it comes to mobile technology (as will be shown in the following sections of this chapter), respondents felt conversing with headphones still in showed a lack of respect. They felt that the other person was not equally engaged in the conversation, or simply did not care enough to remove their headphones. There was a sense that, when people try to have conversations with their music playing, they are less connected to the conversation, or even to their surroundings in general, and that they lacked focus.

What is interesting is that those who felt this way were generally over the age of 30, or digital immigrants. Only five respondents under 30 felt that conversing with headphones was rude, and besides one 15 year old, the next youngest was 26. The 15 year old also quantified her response by saying that, although she found it rude, it was something she does as well:

> **Female/15/Orlando, USA:** I don't think they're making people more anti-social, I think they're just helping it along. I do find it rude when people have their headphones while talking, but I do that, too, so I can't really complain.

As did one of the 26 year old respondents:

> **Male/26/Vancouver, Canada:** I do find it antisocial and rude, but I do it.

Among the older respondents who felt that it was rude, responses included:

> **Male/30/Denmark:** I do find it rude when people do not take off their headphones

> **Male/38/Bourdeaux, France:** Yes, I do find it rude if I am talking to someone and they don't take their headphones out.

> **Male/49/Ottawa, Canada:** Yes, I find it rude when people talk with me with their headphones on. Or take phone calls in the middle of a conversation. But that's more a matter of "lack of manners" on a grand scale than simply the impact of digital technology on society. We increasingly behave like boors and use technology as an excuse for that.

> **Male/42/Akron, USA:** I never use my iPod to ignore others. I refuse to talk to people with their headphones in – I'll stare at them until they take them out.

Female/26/Prince George, Canada: I do not do this to others, as I do not use my MP3 player ALL the time, but have noticed others who do so. It is quite rude!

Female/41/Sechelt, Canada: I do not have an iPod, but yet I do find it rude when people talk to me with their headphones still in. This shows me disrespect as the person talking to me does not want to give me his full attention. I would have the feeling I am not as good and not worthy of this person's attention.

A number of respondents felt that it was rude to hold a conversation with your headphones in, because the speaker feels as if they are not worth the other's full attention. Regardless of its validity, they nevertheless find it personally insulting, and against 'proper' social etiquette. Similarly, there were those who felt it was the world in general that was being ignored. These respondents felt that those who go through their daily lives with headphones in were not fully connected to the world around them. In their own words,

Female/54/Burns Lake, Canada: I don't have an iPod. There is an element of the antisocial, although most I've encountered remove the earplugs when you try to talk to them. The one thing is that when they're listening to music on their iPods, they don't initiate conversation. Life goes on around them, but they're not totally engaged with it.

Male/29/Edinburgh, UK: Completely agree. People walk around in their own little bubbles and don't interact with those around them.

Female/64/Ancaster, Canada: I also feel that people who are constantly listening on iPods are missing other things around them. I do not believe that anyone can be aware of all aspects of their environment all the time, so something is sacrificed when earbuds are used.

Female/26/Prince George, Canada: I do find it rude when people talk to me when their headphones are in, and especially the people who grocery shop with them on…not because I would want to talk to them, but because they tend to be distracted and not move out of the way like a person who could hear would do if they were blocking an aisle.

Interestingly, none of the high school students explicitly expressed that they found it rude when people talked to them with headphones on, or they were indifferent to it.

(B) Conversing with headphones: sometimes, but not always rude

Respondents in category (A) felt that it was, in general, rude to converse with people without removing the headphones. These tended to be older respondents. This

category focuses on respondents who either felt that it was rude to converse with headphones in, unless proper etiquette was followed, or that it was not an issue, unless specific circumstances arose, such as headphone leakage or having to repeat themselves.

I have grouped these responses into a broad category, because they all find conversations accompanied by iPod use rude in specific scenarios. There are different levels of perceived rudeness, but for the most part, these respondents focus on issues of etiquette, and what may eventually emerge as a social norm. The responses can, therefore, be grouped into subcategories focusing on the specific circumstances in which conversing with headphones is either rude or acceptable. One respondent, in particular, felt quite indifferent towards the whole situation:

> **Male/26/Glasgow, UK:** I don't know if they make people more anti-social but they're certainly a good crutch if you want to be. I have used my mp3 player to ignore people but it it's someone I know I always take it out, same if I'm entering a place of business, you never know if someone will be greeting at the door and I feel rude if I have to pretend I've heard them or ask them to repeat. I don't find it that rude if someone keeps the headphones in because a lot of people do that but turn the sound off, to keep their hair tidy or just so they don't have to re-insert them. I've noticed quite a few people just hit pause and that's fine by me.

In his indifference, this respondent also alludes to the fact that these conversations are most likely limited and short, which brings us to the first category of acceptable headphone use:

B1: Acceptable if the conversation is short

Common social etiquette dictates that when people are engaged in conversation, they generally pay close attention to each other and the conversation, as an indication of respect and sense of engagement. These rules do change, however, with short exchanges, especially when people run into each other unexpectedly; i.e., during transit, the most common time to use iPods. While it is expected that one would remove their headphones in order to conduct an in-depth conversation, how appropriate is it during short exchanges? For the respondents, it seemed to be quite acceptable to leave headphones in during conversation, as long as it was brief and superficial; for anything more than a short exchange, one would be expected to remove one's headphones.

> **Male/24/Austin, USA:** I use my iPod on long car trips and that is about it. Cardio, maybe. I don't even use it for normal weight lifting (gets in the way, and I often work out with others). Earbuds are easy to talk through, but yes, if you actually want to exchange more than 2 lines of dialogue, please take them out.

B2: Acceptable if one earbud is removed

Particularly amongst youth, the one-ear-in, one-ear-out approach for short social exchanges was perceived as an entirely valid method of communication. Even amongst older respondents, this was cited quite frequently. In regards to social etiquette, it gives the impression that the conversation deserves a certain amount of respect, while at the same time, creates a social interaction boundary. The visual boundary of one earbud indicates a short exchange that will not progress into an in-depth conversation:

> **Male/22/Calgary, Canada:** People have not become more antisocial, they are just better at it. What used to be your face in newspaper, is now white buds in your ear. Only difference is you can't pretend not to hear someone when you're reading. Yeah, both headphones in is annoying when they talk though. I prefer one out with it turned off. That's what I do.

> **Female/36/Raleigh, USA:** It is annoying when I am trying to have a conversation with someone wearing headphones and prefer that they remove at least one.

> **Female/45/BC, Canada:** I have only one earphone in if I'm around other people. I do find it rude when other people have their headphones in, and are oblivious to others. I find the cellphone more obnoxious.

Digital youth, when I interviewed them, overwhelmingly cited the one-ear-in method of listening as an appropriate social norm. None of them felt that it was rude to carry on conversations in this fashion, even extended ones:

> **Male/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada:** I sometimes see people put one ear in so they can still talk and listen.

> **Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada:** You have one ear in, and one ear out, kinda deal.

> **Male/Grade 11/Burns Lake, Canada:** Yeah, you can still talk to people but you have background music going.

As most prior research has tended to regard personal stereo use as a private, predominantly solitary activity, why, then, is it that these students feel so strongly

otherwise? I cannot extrapolate that the determining factor would be the rural/urban dichotomy, so what I hypothesize is that it is a result of age and changing technology.

As for age, unlike previous studies, these students are younger, and grew up well versed in digital and iPod culture. As iPod culture becomes more encompassing within our society, this generation is adapting by increasingly melding technology with their everyday social life. They have originated new social interactions and re-defined social taboos in order to effectively assimilate into iPod culture. When iPods were first unveiled in 2001, these students were between the ages of seven and eleven, a prime time to form and adapt to new social norms and behaviours. Instead of taking established ways of listening to music and trying to apply them to the iPod, these adolescents were able to take the technology and adapt their music, as well as social norms, to that.

As for technology, it is firmly rooted within iPod culture. With so many respondents stating the 'one ear in, one out' way of listening as a legitimate method, I would argue that earbuds are a determining factor in changing the perception that iPods result in socially isolating behaviour. When personal stereos, or Walkmans, were first introduced in the 1980s, larger headphones were the norm. At that time, people wanted their music to be visibly portable; in other words, it was *cool* to have large headphones with great hi-fi sound. If music was going to be everywhere, then it needed to sound good. Headphones, however, promoted a very isolated, individualistic experience with sound. Their large size and whole-ear coverage meant that with appropriate volume levels no outside sound needed to reach the listener. People were essentially encased within a bubble of their own sounds, separated from others in a personalized soundscape. In order to share music, it necessitated physically removing the headphones, then standing and waiting, often annoyed, while the other person listened. Conversation also required the total removal of the headphones, while their bulk signalled a 'don't talk to me' message to those around.

Although earbuds came into production in the early 1990s, their popularity dramatically increased with the emergence of iPod's white earbuds in 2001. Then, not only could you have your music on your person at all times, but it *looked* cool as

well. The white earbuds were coveted as the ultimate accessory and signalled that you owned a prized iPod. With earbuds, it also became much easier to share music. For the most part, you can still hear outside sounds, such as people trying to get your attention, and their small size does not have the same anti-social appearance as headphones; but more important, the ear buds are not attached. Unlike headphones, where both ear pieces need to be removed to hear outside noise, one earbud can quite easily be slipped out of the ear, in order to facilitate conversation, or to share that earbud with someone else. Letting someone hear a song no longer requires that awkward moment of waiting for the other person to be done – you can listen together, and converse about the song in real time.

Time will see how these social norms will evolve further, but for the moment, it seems perfectly acceptable for people to have a constant soundtrack playing in the background of their lives and conversations. This was picked up by one student, who noted the difference between headphones and earbuds quite well:

> **Male/Grade 11/Burns Lake, Canada:** I know when I wear them I'm less social… but I have the big headphones that cover my ears. But people with the earbuds in – they have them in all the time and it doesn't seem to affect them at all.

B3: Disrespectful if you can hear their music

Continuing with the issue of etiquette, the final two circumstances are ways of interacting from the point of view of the speaker who is not using mobile technology. While the first two dealt with ways technology could enhance conversations and be markers of social boundaries, the final two are perceived negatives of mobile music technology. Instead of promoting effective communication, they are reasons why people dislike the technology and its position in social relations. These annoyances relate to conversations when someone has one or more earphones in, and you: (1) can hear the person's music, or (2) have to repeat yourself. Both send perceived signals of disrespect, and that there is no value to the conversation.

In terms of being able to hear the person's music through their headphones, respondents felt that it was being made abundantly clear that the person had no desire to pay attention, and placed more value on the music than the conversation. While some listeners did not mind if people had one earphone in, as long as they could not hear the music, being able to hear the music is an out-rightly disrespectful action.

When the music cannot be heard, it can be assumed that it has either been paused, or that the earphone has not been removed for boundary demarcation or aesthetic reasons, such as not wanting to mess up one's hair, etc. If, however, the music can be heard, there is no other option than to assume that the person does not want to converse. As noted by respondents:

> **Male/33/Ontario, Canada:** Although I am not too bothered by people talking to me with their head phones in as long as I cannot hear the music. It's when they pull one out and I can hear the music that I find rude.

> **Male/23/Winnipeg, Canada:** I also don't find it especially rude when people talk to me with headphones in, as long as it isn't clear that they are still listening to music while conversing with me. That would definitely be disrespectful.

It seems that people are willing to ignore what is being played on another's headphones; as long as the music cannot be heard, they can assume that it has been shut off. This disregard adds to the development of iPod etiquette, a form of 'don't ask, don't tell' in regards to audio and social boundaries. Whoever holds control of the music, generally controls the situation itself. This can very easily become a power and control issue, both as it relates to the music selection and also the conversation.

Musical control of the environment can extend past one-on-one conversations to group situations and public spaces, as well[266]. Most notably, on buses people will turn the volume up, or play music from their phones, to the point where surrounding people can also hear the music. These users, through their musical taste and listening styles, are infringing on another's personal space, as well as imposing their tastes on them, who are often left feeling intimidated and at a loss of how to respond respectfully. These users, in controlling the situation, take the soundscape hostage.

This has to be considered separately from situations where people do not have personal control over the music. I am referring specifically to shops and other public spaces that use music, such as Muzak, in order to encourage certain behaviours and ambience in their environment. Confined public spaces, such as a bus, on the other hand, are not meant to be controlled by private members, so the

[266] Richard Leppert, 'Desire, Power, and the Sonoric Landscape: Early Modernism and the Politics of Musical Privacy,' in *The Place of Music*, ed. Andrew Leyshon, David Matless and George Revill (New York: Guildford Press, 1998).

intrusion of music from others does not tend to be welcomed. These sentiments are not limited to iPods, but extend to cell phones. Strangely, while person-to-person conversations are readily tolerated, the one-sided conversation of the mobile phone tends to incite annoyance. Several respondents commented on headphone leakage:

> **Female/64/Ancaster, Canada:** It annoys me on the bus to hear the tinny part of someone else's music. One time it was so loud I moved. I hate hearing other people's private conversations that are shouted in a public arena like the bus. Who but you cares if you're going to visit Aunt Mable tomorrow? That is intruding on my aural space. I have seldom used earbuds except when I need to listen in a public place like the library and don't want to disturb others. Earbuds allow that kind of private listening without normally disturbing others.

> **Male/25/Ottawa, Canada:** Haven't had much experience with people talking to me while wearing headphones. Probably not too bothersome (although funny when they talk with their music playing and end up shouting!). My only real problem is headphone leakage. So irritating!

B4: Disrespectful when you have to repeat yourself

Continuing with iPod use in public settings being considered disrespectful and rude, a number of respondents did not like having to repeat themselves in conversation with people who had not removed their earphones during conversation. Breaching the don't-ask-don't-tell guideline of iPod etiquette, it becomes quite obvious that the person is paying more attention to their music than the conversation when they keep having to ask the other to repeat the question. It sends the signal that, 'even though I can't hear what you're saying, it's not worth my time to actually remove the technology that's hindering our conversation'. Once again, it is a way to signal a non-committal attitude towards the speaker, and the conversation as a whole.

In general, these respondents did not feel that conversations involving headphone use were rude or disrespectful, up until the point that they could hear the other person's music:

> **Female/39/Fairfax, USA:** I'm not as offended by people with their headphones still in unless they're asking me to repeat things because their iPod is playing too loud.

> **Male/32/Maryland, USA:** I don't think it's rude to leave headphones in, I do think it's rude if you leave the music on, or turned up to the point you can't understand the speaker.

> **Male/45/North Shields, UK:** If someone tries to have a conversation with me while they still have their headphones still on then it'll only bother me if it's obvious that they're not able to hear me properly. (The same principle applies if I'm the one initiating the conversation; I'll always take my headphones off if I think I don't be able to hear the response)

B5: The other side

The focus, so far, has been on the opinions of those conversing with iPod users, but what about the opinions of the users? In order to avoid unwanted social interactions, users often retain their earbuds as a signal to others that they do not wish to engage in conversation. While it may be considered rude that users do not remove both headphones when a conversation strikes up, is the corollary true: that it is also rude for people to ignore the signal of the headphones and start up a conversation anyways? Is it appropriate etiquette to entice a conversation with those who are signalling otherwise, and should this be considered rude?

A number of respondents noted that they do not like to be interrupted when listening to music on their iPods. They see the headphones as a clear signal to others that they do not wish to be interrupted, even though they are in a public space. In the same way that music can control space and environment, they wish to have control over theirs, to allow the private into the public:

> **Female/24/Sydney, Australia:** Absolutely it's rude! Do we start talking to people who are reading books or newspapers or talking on the phone on trains? Listening to music can be a deeply personal experience, especially if you have your headphones on, and shouldn't be intruded in on by others unless they are invited to do so.

> **Male/31/Atlanta, USA:** More the opposite: I find it rude when people talk to me with MY headphones still in. If you need to get my attention, tap me on the shoulder! Why do you assume I can hear you, you see I have headphones! ☺ I'm not sure MP3 players make us antisocial, I just think they make more inclined to media saturate ourselves in our private time

That being said, as will be shown in category D, digital youth do not recognize headphones as advertising privacy within a social setting; instead, many of them see headphones as an invitation to conversation.

(C) Headphones: provide 'me' time

The general consensus of respondents of the online interview was that iPod-type devices were beneficial in order to provide personal space within the public arena. It

was a way for them to take control of their environments, effectively filling their personal soundscape with familiar and wanted sounds. It becomes a way to *acceptably ignore* others, not with the intention to be rude or antisocial, but as a buffer to the sensory overload of public spaces, or stressful environments. Most people only use them in this fashion when they are not in the presence of friends and/or family, and find them no more isolating than reading a book in a public space.

It is interesting that these devices can be perceived as providing an acceptable form of social isolation. In the one sense, users are not socially isolated in that they are physically occupying a public space; on the other, they are claiming that space with their personalised soundscape. Just as Bull has noted, in his study of iPod users in urban spaces, they are trying to 'warm-up' the space, to make unfamiliar environments more familiar and less threatening.[267] Rather than being perceived as antisocial, users want the latitude of personal privacy within a social setting, not to be rude or disrespectful, but to send a subtle message that they do not want to engage in *unwanted* social contact. In this sense, the use of headphones becomes an acceptable way to inform others that they do not wish to engage in conversation, and would prefer to be left alone, for the time being.

There is a sense that it is not antisocial to listen to one's music in a public space, as one would not normally engage in conversation with people they did not know, although it often takes away from social niceties we have come to expect, such as saying 'hi' as you encounter another, 'excuse me' if you need to pass, or just striking up a conversation over something you noticed in another. The iPod *may* make it less likely for these incidents to occur, but if someone really wants to talk to another, the signal of the headphones may not deter them. There is a sense, amongst respondents, that the perceived social isolation of the iPod is no different than previous technologies, such as books, or even daydreaming. As noted by respondents:

> **Female/24/Sydney, Australia:** Yes mp3 players afford us the opportunity to shut-out the world and social interaction, but so do books, newspapers, watching TV, and daydreaming. If we weren't listening to music, we'd be doing any of the above. We don't live in a society where it's particularly acceptable to start talking to total strangers one bumps into at the supermarket anyway, so in a sense we're already quite antisocial (in physical life, quite the

[267] Bull, *Sound Moves*.

opposite in digital life however). MP3 players merely fill in the blank times between social interactions we do want to engage in.

Male/23/Edinburgh, UK: I think they serve lots of useful functions. The ability to acceptably ignore people is an excellent one! I don't think we're becoming more antisocial, it just seems less antisocial to be antisocial.

Male/29/Edinburgh, UK: I don't think MP3 players/iPods are making people more antisocial, but I think that they, along with mobile phones, are extremely accessible tools which can be conveniently used for avoiding interaction during certain encounters or on certain occasions. They are options for effectively demarcating the boundaries between public and private space. I have used my iPod and my mobile phone to avoid public interaction, but I rarely talk to others with iPod headphones in my ears.

C1: Personal space required

Amongst respondents, there was a clear sense that sometimes one just needs their own space in the public domain. A distinction was made between wanted, and unwanted forms of social interaction, with the latter typically originating with strangers. In this circumstance, the iPod becomes a form of security blanket, shielding users from unwanted interactions, not only by the headphones, but also the actual music. If the music is turned up loud enough, then 'outside' noises cannot penetrate the personal soundscape, allowing people to effectively contain themselves in a personalised bubble. 'Me' time can be achieved and unwanted social interactions limited:

Male/20/San Francisco, USA: Sometimes I use my iPod to ignore others if I'm on the bus and there's come crackhead yelling or there's a group of kids having a loud conversation but I never intentionally use my iPod as a way to directly ignore friends or family.

Female/26/Ottawa, Canada: Disagree. Although I do pop in the ear buds if a crazy person starts talking to me on the bus.

Female/27/Abbotsford, Canada: I don't think it makes them more antisocial, but gives them more 'me' time while using an iPod while commuting to work on the train, bus, etc.

Male/44/St. Catharines, Canada: Indeed, I think that MP3 players are used to isolate oneself from the pervasive demand to be socially saturated at all times. iPods restore some small measure of the private realm to oneself. Rather than anti-social I would describe it as a reclamation of the personal/private in the face of what Deleuze described as the pervasive demand to be continually connected and constantly communicating. I suppose that

that's a bit ironic inasmuch as one is still connected to the broader media consumption matrix but there you have it…

Male/22/New York City, USA: I don't think it makes people antisocial, but it is a way to create privacy when it's wanted. I have used my iPod to avoid conversations on planes.

Male/35/New Zealand: I believe that MP3 players can allow people to remove themselves from certain social situations, for instance interacting with other passengers on public transport. I use my iPod to eliminate external distracting noise so I can concentrate on important tasks.

Male/25/Connecticut, USA: They're convenient for ignoring people in situations where you don't want to be bothered (bad mood, lots of work to do, etc) but I am more than willing to take off my headphones to talk to someone.

Female/39/Fairfax, USA: Yes, I have used my iPod as a way to avoid unwanted conversations with strangers on the bus.

Male/21/Boston, USA: I'm not an antisocial person in general. In fact, I feel as though I'm very personable and outgoing. But, in the mornings, especially before my coffee, I use my iPod as a buffer between me and the rest of the world so I don't have to talk to other people. I put my headphones in before I leave my front door and take them off when I'm at my desk in my office. I need the half hour of solace while riding the subway and walking to work.

C2: Isolation from social overload

Respondents alluded to a desire for 'me time' in public spaces, and to block out excessive social overload. Just as people can incur sensory and/or information overload from internet use, without having the appropriate filters, the culture of perpetual contact can place immense pressure on people to always be engaged in social interactions, whether digitally or in person. The iPod, in this circumstance, becomes a personal gatekeeper, or social interaction filter. In order to avoid social overload, one can retreat into one's personal soundscape: one's security blanket. Digitality encourages perpetual social contact, but the iPod can provide a buffer to this. The irony in this is that while I consider the iPod to be a symbol of the culture, it also becomes a remedy for some of its overwhelming aspects. In the words of the respondents:

Female/23/BC, Canada: "Making people more antisocial" is a very slanted way of putting it. In my case, it's certainly not making me antisocial. What it's done is given me a way not to be socially overloaded when I don't want to. If I didn't have my iPod (and before it, my portable CD player), taking the bus

daily would be a nightmare and leave me drained and twitchy by the end of it. With the nice, socially isolating bubble of my music, the most irritating part is waiting for the bus.

Female/30/Prince George, Canada: I do use my iPod to decompress, so to speak. If I feel like I do not want to speak to anyone, I will listen to music in a secluded area.

(D) iPods as a social tool

So far, the various tenuous relationships between sociability and iPod use have been explored. The notion that iPods can promote social interaction was the prevailing sentiment with the high school-aged students, who were interviewed in person. None felt that iPods were making people less social, and most felt quite the opposite. When asked if they felt iPods were making people less social, responses included:

Female/Grade 9/Buns Lake, Canada: Uff, No! Are you kidding me? Everyone, like, you're just sitting there and they're like "what are you listening to?" and you're like "oh, you gotta listen to this!"…And then you put it on speaker, or something, and everyone just starts to dance.

Female/Grade 8/Burns Lake, Canada: You can do both at the same time. When you're sitting with someone they might want to listen to it, too. Then you socialize and talk about what you're listening to.

Female/Grade 10/Burns Lake, Canada: I think it kinda can get you talking because people will be, like, "do you like this song? Do you have this song? This song's good, you should get it." It kinda gets you talking.

Male/Grade 12/Burns Lake, Canada: You have one ear in, and one ear out, kinda deal.

In conversation with these youth, it became clear that the technology was not seen as a barrier to conversation. In general, they would not hesitate to engage in conversation with someone who was listening to their iPod, and even those who were doing the listening would not be bothered by the distraction. The technology has been integrated into their relationships, almost to the point of being an extension of themselves. As with youth and the invisibility of the internet, they did not see the technology in their actions, but what it could do to enhance social interactions and settings.

These changing social norms were not limited to the youngest of respondents, either. Older respondents also found that the iPod could lead to increased, or

enhanced, social interactions, through the sharing of headphones, as a conversation starter, or as a way to bond over musical tastes. Although it should be noted that, in many of these instances, the respondents were not speaking from personal experience, but from their observations of youth, particularly their own children.

In Part I of this thesis, music was discussed as a way to form relationships, as people bond over musical tastes, whether or not they are shared. The sheer act of discussing music creates a bond between people, as it becomes a venue for disclosing a piece of one's identity. With identity being so closely tied to musical taste, discussing such issues, or sharing music with one another, becomes a very personal experience. In social settings, the iPod and MP3 players make sharing of music easier and more immediate. This can be achieved, either by plugging the music into external speakers for a large group to hear:

> **Female/26/Ottawa, Canada:** I find MP3 players can actually be a social tool. I bring mine with me to friends' houses to share music with them and vice versa.

or by the sharing of earbuds, which is also a sharing of personal space, physically. As the cables that connect earbuds are quite short, people must remain in close contact to share music in this fashion:

> **Male/62/Park Forest, USA:** MP3 players & iPods do not make people rude & antisocial. Such products are often part of socializing; people recommend & trade music; they rip out an earbud & shove it at a friend to listen to what they have going on. Rudeness by users of these products don't come close to that of cell phone users.

> **Female/37/Cardiff, Wales:** I've seen people sharing their headphones and music – sat together with a headphone bud each which is a good thing.

The community created by music, therefore, can break through perceived technological incitements of social isolation. Just as with the internet, people will find ways to be social with MP3 players and create an intimate bond. It can initiate a conversation, bring people together physically, or create an in-group of users:

> **Male/25/Connecticut, USA:** Also, I'm finding that it makes people social in a strange way. I'm a high school teacher, and I see many of my students splitting their headphones with a friend – either to share a song with someone, or to just have music as well. It creates this strangely intimate bong – sharing music, but also sharing proximity.

Female/27/Montreal, Canada: I don't own an MP3 player of an iPod, but I still have a portable CD player. I don't think these devices (in which I include the archaic Walkman) are necessarily antisocial. They can create a kind of barrier, though. But the barrier (in urban spaces, at least) seems to always be there, as I don't feel I could reach out to anybody on the sole purpose of "getting to know them" in the subway, at the grocery store or elsewhere, with or without an iPod on their ears. However, through your music tastes, you can reach out to other people who have roughly the same tastes, at concerts, through the Internet, through common friends, etc. Music can really help building connections between people.

Female/28/Edinburgh, UK: In some ways, people connect to others when seeing a fellow ipod'er on the street/subway/gym.

Female/19/Missouri, USA: While some people may use iPods to ignore others, I don't know anyone who does that. With me, my iPod is actually quite the conversation starter. I could sit down and talk to someone about their iPod and their musical tastes for a long time.

Male/34/Dublin, Ireland: I suppose people have used headphones for as long as they've been around to shut other people out, and this certainly has its benefits in urban environments (and indeed families!). but it's worth pointing out that excluding other people is also being Included in a community of group of listeners, it is prioritising this "community of interest" over the contingent "community of locality"

That being said, because I am wary of technological determinism, I must maintain that it is not the device, itself, which is determining sociability. Rather, what I hoped to have shown in this chapter is that iPod-type devices can effectively be incorporated into the person-music-technology relationship. The technology, therefore, does not hinder the person-music-person relationship, but adds another dimension, one that focuses on the musical aspect. The iPod becomes a carrier of identity, in the form of musical taste, and can easily be handed over to another, in an act of fostering or building on a connection.

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This chapter has explored concepts of sociability within digitality and iPod culture. An examination of previous literature revealed that there is currently no established ideology which can adequately examine the social relationship between the iPod and internet technologies in everyday life. Instead, I elected to draw on a number of ideologies and less established methods, as more entrenched theories such as SCOT and ANT look at how society shapes technological development and lack a focus on

how technology is affecting social relations. This is not to say that I believe that technology directly affects society, but that the way in which it is adopted by users and non-users alike, ultimately influences social relations and interactions. The iPod, as has been shown, is helping to alter and reshape social taboos and norms as they relate to conversations and interactions in the public domain, both between strangers and with friends. The headphones and earbuds worn by users portray a signal of social unavailability, as well as a security blanket to protect the user from unwanted interaction. Alternatively, they can be seen as a way to initiate conversation, or engage in social interaction via musical tastes.

Etiquette on social interactions and technology is developing but at varying degrees, depending on the demographic. It is predominantly digital youth who see the iPod as an invitation for social engagement, while digital immigrants use it as a way to establish personal space within a public venue. Of course, there is no established and accepted etiquette, to date, but it is important to note that different forms are developing. The concept of idiosociability allows for a myriad of social and relational possibilities within digitality. At the present time, users and non-users focus on a personalised sense of etiquette, often applying previous norms to the new technology. It follows that digital youth, however, would establish their own sense of etiquette, as they have grown up entirely immersed in this culture and are the driving force behind how it will develop. Today's digital youth will determine the social norms for iPod culture, but as they age, the new generation will develop new ways of interacting with each other and technology. The speed, however, at which technology is evolving seems much quicker than development of new, relational, social norms.

I argue that the concept of idiosociability will continue, as well as technology that promotes sociability. How people respond to that will be personal and varied. As I have said, we are social beings, with ever evolving ways of being social, depending on culture, the environment, and belief systems in place, but with such a variety of technology being developed, with the purpose of creating sociability, such as the iPad, iPhone, social networking sites, P2P networking, etc, people must carve their own way of being in the world, by sometimes pushing the boundaries of societal and cultural norms, but also staying within some which are firmly

entrenched. Just as the traditional gatekeepers of knowledge and information have been overshadowed by the internet, the gatekeepers of sociability and culture are also shifting. There is no monopoly on social technologies, and while social etiquette does have some firmly held beliefs, changes are happening. How they evolve should be of interest to us all.

CONCLUSION

As outlined in the introduction, this thesis is primarily about the interpersonal and technological relationships which develop within a culture of digitality. It is important to recognize the interconnectedness of these relationships, and that they are not about technological or social determinism, but of symbiosis – each dependent on the other for initiating change and maintaining norms. In order to forge these relationships, it was determined that taste and identity are important factors, with music being both an outward and inward expression of taste and identity. As these relationships evolve, so do our societal norms, stereotypical assumptions, and taste and identity formation processes. It is critical that we gain a clear understanding of our digital culture, or digitality, to discern trends and behaviours that can be used by academia, the media, and general public, as well as the business and manufacturing world. This paper lays the groundwork for that understanding.

While digitality is the primary focus of the thesis, the concept of an iPod culture is referenced throughout. iPod culture can be considered as the inclusion of music in digitality and not merely the act of owning and/or using a mobile MP3 player. The iPod becomes a symbol of musical culture and tastes within digitality, not solely a technological device. Although the majority of respondents owned, or had access to an MP3 player, the culture is not defined by ownership, as everyone is affected by the culture and society in which they are socialized, and each will bring forth a unique and interesting experience. The concept of iPod culture unites Part I and Part II of this work. Part I explores issues of taste and identity in relation to everyday life and music, while Part II examines taste, identity and the internet and social networking sites, in particular. iPod culture represents music and the internet for quite basic reasons: digital downloading of music via the internet and the iPod as a physical representation of one's musical tastes.

This dissertation presents a snapshot of our current cultural situation. I chose to define it as digitality, as I feel that digital technology is greatly influencing the shaping of our social interactions. Throughout, the two main themes became apparent: differences in involvement and engagement with digitality between digital natives and digital immigrants; and a developing culture of eclecticism.

Digital Natives/Digital Immigrants

Although I focused on a variety of social determinants in the examination of taste, such as education levels, marital status, gender and occupational status, the most relevant results were seen with age. Throughout, I make a distinction between the experiences of digital natives, those grown up entirely immersed in digital culture, and digital immigrants, whose early experiences did not involve digital technology, or who are learning it as a second language. While the terms were originally coined by Mark Prensky[268], I appropriated them from Palfrey and Gasser, who make the distinction between those who were shaping digital culture and those who were struggling to keep up with it: demographically, those under and above the age of 30. Although I was hesitant, at first, to split my demographic in such a stark way, the results proved quite interesting. I found substantial differences in how each group was interacting with each other and the media, as well as aspects of their taste and identity formation.

For digital natives, or digital youth, as I prefer to call them, the focus was not the technology, but rather the content, or the ways in which it could promote social interaction. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, were more focused on the transference of previous activities onto digital technology, without fully exploring the social potential of new media and technologies. It was demonstrated that the invisibility of technology enjoyed by the digital youth had not yet transferred to the older respondents of the study. For example, digital youth were statistically more likely to use the internet for social interactions, such as social networking sites, online messenger services, and watching videos on YouTube, as opposed to older respondents, who were statistically more likely to use the internet for reading the news, using online forums, and looking up information. For the youths, the internet was indispensable in forging and maintaining personal relationships. There was a distinct sense that if one is not involved with social networking sites, one would be 'out of the loop' and unable to adequately form new friendships. The online disinhibition effect is allowing these youth to forge friendships in ways that were not previously available to the older respondents. While digital immigrants were

[268] Mark Prensky. 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,' *On the Horizon* 9.5 (2001).

involved in social networking sites, it was nowhere near to the extent of the youngest respondents.

Just as the digital youth are more involved in the social aspects of the internet, they were statistically more likely to create a personalized way of listening to music. In regards to iPod/MP3 player use, they were more likely to create and listen to playlists: for specific mood and activities, and 'on the go'. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, were more likely to listen to podcasts.

Looking past age distinctions, it was found that respondents, in general, were highly involved with both music, and the social aspects of the internet. Amidst criticism that the omnipresence and easy availability of music is destroying people's relationship with the media, it was encouraging to see the high emotional engagement respondents of all ages had with music. There was a general sense that music is a driving force in many people's lives, and an important aspect of identity formation, as their tastes allow them to interact with others, based on similar, or even dissimilar, choices. As with the internet, music is seen as a vital aspect of everyday life, something which many imagine they could not live without.

Culture of Eclecticism

Even with a high level of involvement with music, however, it was determined that the majority of respondents were not fully aware of how to define their musical tastes. Musical tastes are becoming eclectic, or less defined, in a sense that listeners are not aware of genre distinctions. Respondents tended to cite broad, general categories as their preference, without acknowledging the variety of subgenres contained within. This eclecticism was not connected to age – across the entire survey, respondents were more likely to define their tastes by specific artists or songs, rather than genre. I looked to folksonomies as an alternative way to define genres in digitality. Combining genre definitions with the collaborative nature afforded by the internet, folksonomies define artists and songs through a series of user-generated tags, recognizing the fluidity and subjective nature of musical preferences and distinctions.

This fluidity or eclecticism of taste was found to be comparable to that found in identity construction. Because people are influenced by outside factors in the development of their musical tastes, they sometimes alter certain facets of their

personality, while retaining their core values, tastes, and beliefs. In order to negotiate an identity within digitality, a compartmentalization of identity and taste occurs, in which elements of taste and identity become more prominent in certain situations, or around certain groups of people. This compartmentalization of identity extends to the online self, where one may play with different facets of one's identity, which are just fragments of the whole. It has been said that we all wear a mask at times in our lives, and especially in social situations, but the internet affords us the opportunity to delve into and explore those fragments that we otherwise would not.

This eclecticization was also found to extend into aspects of sociability. I use the term idiosocial to describe this phenomenon. Although sociability already implies that there are multiple ways of being social, idiosocial is used to create a distinction between previous forms of sociability and those within digitality – the idio- prefix is an acknowledgement of the influence of eclecticization. Just as people are developing eclectic tastes, through personalized genre distinctions and playlists, they are compartmentalizing their on- and off-line identities, in an effort to develop personalized ways of being social. The social interactions of digital natives, on the one hand, are increasingly influenced and guided by the technologies they use, whereas digital immigrants are more likely to be unsure of how to transfer traditional cultural gatekeeping to digitality.

Impacts/Limitations

This thesis presents a relevant, cultural snapshot of digitality as it existed in 2007-2009. As the technology evolves, however, so will the culture. Although digital culture has been approached from economic, sociological and anthropological perspectives, the addition of the impact music has been necessary for a more comprehensive understanding. In this sense, this thesis shifts the focus from trying to understand digital natives to also include technology's potential impacts on taste, identity and sociability. The interdisciplinary nature of the study has also succeeded in bringing quantitative data into the field of musicology, and melding it with qualitative data to ensure this study will benefit the broadest spectrum of society, from the individual to largest corporation.

The constant evolution of the field also presents one of the greatest challenges and limitations to the study. While important and culturally relevant, the

content quickly becomes as obsolete as the technology that is being studied. It is my hope, therefore, that the paper's methodologies and theoretical standpoint have laid the foundation for further work in this field.

This study is also important for its focus on the mainstream consumer. A large quantity of musicological and sociological work focuses on subcultures, while ignoring the voice of the mainstream. We have to ask: where is the voice of the mainstream? In this sense, the title of this project takes on a dual meaning: the masses refers to either the mass amount of media and information one encounters on a daily basis within digitality, or the mainstream user – the voice of the majority.

Future Considerations

Although the distinction between digital natives, or digital youth, and digital immigrants has proved quite useful in this study, future work may find these demographics problematic. With digital youth, this age range needs to be further broken down, in order to fully comprehend the diversity and impacts of digitality. Birth to young adulthood is a time rich is growth potentials, milestones, and needs, so how this impacts identity and taste formation need to be explored more fully.

The interdisciplinary approach to the study of digitality allows for unique and varied opportunities for future research. Just as technology is constantly evolving, so are its cultural and social impacts and influences. How people develop alongside the technology will always be an important area of sociological, as well as psychological and economic consideration. Many of the current digital technological developments are premised on social interactions, and how to make people *more* social and collaborative. This can be seen in numerous avenues, from the ability to comment on news articles online, voting in reality-based TV shows, sharing songs/playlists in Spotify, tagging artists/songs, or using social networking sites, etc. The list is endless.

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APPENDIX I: METHODOLOGIES

The data used in this thesis were acquired using both qualitative and quantitative means. They were acquired from two main sources: (A) online and (B) in-person from two high schools – Lakes District Secondary School in Burns Lake, Canada and Prestonpans Secondary School in Edinburgh, UK. The surveys used for the quantitative data were the same in sources A and B. The interviews used for source A were exploratory, based on themes used in the online interviews for source B. In total, the dataset was comprised of 1243 surveys and 216 interviews.

Research Design

From the outset, I was focused on presenting both qualitative and quantitative data in my thesis. While I found that the qualitative data used for sociological surveys of music and music technology, such as Tia DeNora's *Music in Everyday Life* and Michael Bull's *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience,* quite useful, I felt the addition of statistical data would make for stronger findings. The findings in music psychology, from studies correlating musical taste with facets of identity, were particularly influential in the decision to include quantitative research. The work of North and Hargreaves was particularly inspiring, so my survey design drew heavily from their research.

Before designing my research, I facilitated a focus group, in August 2007, with six volunteers from the University of Edinburgh. The volunteers were all postgraduate students from varying disciplines and nationalities. The session explored such issues as: what music they were listening to; how and what technologies they were using to listen to music, both in mobile and immobile settings; and their opinions on social networking sites. Their responses helped me focus my research questions, especially on issues concerning the internet and identity formations. It also solidified my opinion that the study would benefit from an approach that combined narrative responses with statistical data. Their responses were interesting in that, while they provided a subjective narrative, I questioned how they fit into a wider spectrum.

I was particularly interested in how music psychologists correlated aspects of identity, such as leisure activities, gender, education and socio-economic status, with musical taste. I found their questions related to demographic information useful, but

their musical definitions quite problematic. Research by North and Hargreaves, correlating lifestyle choices with musical taste, in which respondents were asked to select from a list of thirty-five genres to determine their current musical preferences was, for me, the most productive study to date[269]. Some previous studies fell short, by forcing people into very confined definitions of genres. For example, the following chart shows the genre selection for Bryson's study about the musical preferences of Americans with low educational levels[270]:

Table 1
Percent of total sample who reported disliking each genre or disliking it very much on a 5-point scale

Genre	% Disliking	Genre	% Disliking
Bluegrass	19.7%	New Age/Space	50.1%
Blues/Rythm & Blues	17.6%	Oldies	15.6%
Classical/Chamber	25.0%	Opera	51.5%
Country/Western	14.6%	Pop/Rock	24.9%
Easy Listening	15.6%	Rap	65.6%
Folk	22.5%	Reggae	32.2%
Gospel	16.8%	Latin/Salsa	34.3%
Heavy Metal	73.1%	Show Tunes	21.9%
Jazz	23.0%	Swing/Big Band	17.8%

As you can see, there are a wide variety of genres, but also curious groupings, such as placing pop and rock in the same category. Pop and rock music have a complicated history surrounding their definitions and social associations, so I find it strange that they are placed together, especially when other genres, such as easy listening and new age, achieve separate category status. Placing pop and rock together is also seen in Koen van Eijck's Netherlands-focused study:[271]

> (1) chamber music; (2) symphonic music; (3) opera; (4) improvised music or jazz; (5) blues, Dixieland, etc. (6) pop, rock, reggae, new wave[2] (7) top 40, disco; (8) folk; (9) operetta; (10) spiritual music, gospel, psalms, choirs; (11) sentimental Dutch songs, chansons, popular songs (schmaltzy); (12) music for mandolin, accordion, or guitar; (13) brass band

While these studies are good for providing general trends, they tend to ignore the complicated nature of defining musical styles, both subjectively and objectively, and

[269] Adrian North and David Hargreaves, 'Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference: 3. Travel, Money, Education, Employment, and Health.'
[270] Bethany Bryson, 'What About the Univores?'
[271] Koen van Eijck, 'Social Differentiation in Musical Taste Patterns.' *Social Forces* 79.3 (2001): 1169.

the complex system which is involved in correlating genres with personal identity. Narrowly defined genres run the risk of stereotyping people into categories that do not accurately reflect who they are musically. I would argue that while we cannot realistically define *anyone's* musical taste, or map those unique tastes onto wider cultural trends, I hope to articulate a more individualized approach to the analysis of musical taste.

Before constructing the qualitative aspect of my study, I consulted with Michael Bull, and he provided me with the questions he used for his study on iPod culture. Although I am not certain on the dissemination details, Bull's survey was circulated online, with respondents often sent follow-up emails inviting them to elaborate further. While insightful, I found his interview set to be very long, with 35 questions, and fairly labour intensive: most of the questions required detailed answers in which respondents had to think critically about their iPod use and relationship to it. In order to maximize the response rate, I decided that my interviews would be much shorter and related to my thesis questions: musical taste, internet use in everyday life, social aspects of the internet and social aspects of mobile music technologies.

I constructed a set of seven questions, in which respondents were asked to reply with a 'yes' or 'no' answer. After circulating these questions to my supervisor and peers, I felt that a yes/no approach could be detrimental to my study, as respondents could easily answer without elaborating on their responses, which would effectively be repeating their answers from the survey data. Instead, I re-worked my questions into statements that could be seen as somewhat controversial, in order to provoke responses[272]. This allowed respondents to respond however they felt, often moving into areas not covered by the statement, but pertinent to my research questions. This design was not based on any previous techniques that I had encountered[273], but was an experimental way to conduct online research. I drew on the notion of the online disinhibition effect in computer-mediated-communication, in which people often feel more open to self-disclose information, as opposed to one-

[272] See Appendix III for online interview statements.
[273] For example: Steve Jones, ed. *Doing Internet Research* (London: Sage, 1999) or Christine Hine, ed.,, *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2005)

on-one in person. The method proved effective in gathering a large amount of useful data.

The interviews with high school aged students were primarily exploratory, drawing on the themes discussed in the online interview statements. On average, they were conducted in groups of three; as these respondents were fairly young, and in school, I attempted to keep the interviews quite short, approximately 20 to 30 minutes. I often started with a question that engaged them on a personal level, in order to bridge the interviewer-interviewee gap, as well as diminish my position as an authority figure. For example, in the interviews conducted at Prestonpans Secondary School, I always opened by asking the students who their favourite contestant was on 'X Factor', a popular reality music show that was airing during the time that the interviews were being conducted.

Research Implementation

In order to pilot my survey, it was first completed by three postgraduate students at the University of Edinburgh from three different disciplines – music, history and genetics – in order to gauge comprehensibility and time-scale. As these respondents had no problem understanding the questions being asked, and could complete the survey in approximately 10 minutes, I was confident that most potential respondents could complete the survey in an average of 15 minutes.

The second pilot was conducted by approximately 20 students enrolled in the Music and Social Contexts course at the University of Edinburgh. This is a first-year undergraduate course, open to music and non-music students. These students also had no issues with survey comprehension and were able to complete it in a timely manner.

As a larger scale pilot, the survey was then conducted with students at Lakes District Secondary School (LDSS) in Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada. The results from this pilot were also effective and used in the final dataset for statistical analysis.

The success of the three piloting projects led to the survey being constructed in an online format on SurveyMonkey.com and subsequently distributed online. SurveyMonkey provides surveys that are aesthetically pleasing and easy to use, from both a construction and user standpoint. The first wave of respondents was achieved

through distribution on various social networking sites and mailing lists. In particular, I posted a link[274] to the survey on my Facebook page and encouraged my Facebook friends to do the same. I also posted the link on various Facebook groups, asking for help with my PhD research. While I am aware that people posted the link on other mailing lists, I have no knowledge of which particular lists these are. I did, however, post it to four academic mailing lists: IASPM (International Association for the Study of Popular Music); SPAN (Scottish Popular Music Academics Network); all registered students of the School of Arts, Culture and the Environment at the University of Edinburgh; and all staff within the same institution. I anticipate that I received approximately 300 of the 1243 survey responses from these initiatives.

Approximately just under half of the survey responses originated from strategic blog posts. Most notably, David Hepworth[275], editor for The Word magazine, and Leander Kahney[276] (via Eliot Van Buskirk), editor for Wired (US) magazine, published blog posts with a link to my survey website and encouraged their readers to 'help out a PhD student'.

The online interviews were distributed to those who provided an accurate email address in the survey. In total, I received 106 completed online interviews which, combined with the 110 in-person interviews at the two high schools, totalled 216 interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Steps were taken to ensure total anonymity of respondents. Those completing the online survey/interview had to read a welcome page, ensuring that their answers would remain anonymous, before they could begin the survey. Implied consent was therefore achieved.

For the high school aged respondents from LDSS and Prestonpans Secondary, permission was first granted by the respective school boards, as well as by the individual students. Those completing the print version of the survey read a waiver ensuring their anonymity, which they signed before completing the survey.

[274] A dedicated website was used to link to the SurveyMonkey page. As the link provided by the SurveyMonkey site was long and confusing, I registered the site themusicsurvey.com that would lead people to the online survey. In this way, I was able to tell people to go to themusicsurvey.com, where they could easily access the survey. This site is no longer registered in my name, however.
[275] See: http://www.wordmagazine.co.uk/content/help-a-reader-with-her-phd
[276] See: http://www.wired.com/listening_post/2008/06/help-a-phd-stud/

Those involved in the interviews were asked to give verbal consent to their answers being used anonymously in my thesis, as well as being recorded for transcription purposes. They were also asked to sign my interview book, to confirm their decision, as well as keep track of those who had completed the interview. Only first names were given and students were free to provide a pseudonym if they preferred. The only person who had access to that information was me.

I encountered disclosure issues at LDSS, which had implications for the remainder of the data collection. While the school board had initially approved my survey, upon arrival at the school, several instructors expressed apprehension regarding questions about socio-economic status. Although I maintained that these questions were optional, and that the results would remain anonymous, it was decided that all demographic information would be removed, except: age, gender and location. This, unfortunately, meant that I could not explore socio-economic relationships in musical taste and MP3 player use.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data was conducted using a very hands-on approach; no specialized software was used. The results emerged from the data, as opposed to being fit into imposed categories. All responses to a particular statement were read, making note of the answers and how often they were repeated. These responses were refined into broad categories. The responses were, therefore, re-read with these categories in mind, and marked with their respective category. Categories were not considered mutually exclusive; responses could fall into more than one category, and often did. These coded responses were then collected into separate documents for further analysis.

Data Limitations

Sample

As the survey was predominantly distributed online, it could be argued that my dataset includes a non-random sample. Because a number of responses were achieved via social networking sites and academic mailing lists, the respondents were statistically more educated than the general public. Unfortunately, this could not be explored from a socio-economic perspective (see above). It could also be argued that a majority of respondents might have had a predilection towards music

and technology, as they were readers of either The Wired, a technology magazine, or Word, a music magazine. Alternatively, I would argue that my dataset was no less random than any other large-scale survey: while I attempted to distribute the survey as widely as possible, it is still the choice of respondents as to whether or not they participate. The fact that it reached such a large number of respondents would imply a certain degree of randomness.

Respondents under the age of 18 could be perceived as being even more randomized. While I drew on two particular high schools, the respondents within those schools were drawn, at random, from either the gym or music class. They did not know what they were participating in until they arrived for the interview, and it was by selection of their instructor, not myself. Even though the two high schools represented different demographics – urban vs. rural / UK vs. Canada – I achieved data saturation across both.

Repeated Survey Respondents

SurveyMonkey has built in features that ensure that respondents do not fill out the survey more than once. Primarily, the site records the respondents' IP address. As a secondary precaution, I asked respondents to provide their name and email address. In order to filter out alternative forms of sabotage, I also scrutinized all the raw data, deleting respondents who answered the entire survey with one repeated answer.

Ecological Validity

As the survey was completed by volunteers, in their own time, and on their chosen technologies, I find that the issue of ecological validity is not of primary importance to this dataset. The surveys were not conducted outside a 'real world' setting, and the questions were not designed to confuse or trick respondents into answering in a particular way. I had no control over the environment in which respondents completed the surveys. In this sense, respondents could be seen as presenting data as close to their 'everyday' experiences as possible.

In regards to external validity, in a more general sense, however, issues may arise in inferring broad generalisations from my dataset in the sense that my respondents were more highly educated than the general public, and the core sample is primarily generated from three First World Countries: Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. While it is noted within the body of the

thesis that this is the case, it would affect external validity in that these responses may not be transferable to all members of society. Generalisations are possible, in regards to the specific demographic makeup of my dataset, but I cannot infer that they would be similar for all socio-economic and education levels.

APPENDIX II: SURVEY

Music Survey

1.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey!!

The results from this survey will be used for my PhD dissertation on iPod culture at the University of Edinburgh. It shouldn't take too long to complete, and all respondents will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me at: ipod.melissa@gmail.com

Thanks again!
Melissa K. Avdeeff

2. Background Information

*** 1. Basic Info:**

Name (for control purposes only - all results remain anonymous):

City/Town:

State/Province:

Country:

Email Address:

*** 2. Date of birth**

Month, Day, Year — MM / DD / YYYY

*** 3. Gender**

- Male
- Female

*** 4. Marital Status**

Please select one answer

*** 5. Education**

Please select the highest level of education you have completed

*** 6. Occupational Status**

Please select one answer which best describes your current situation

*** 7. Occupation**

8. Approximate annual income (optional)

3. Activities

Please indicate how often you take part in the following activities. Select only one answer per question.

*** 1. How often do you...**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Don't Know
See a movie at the cinema	○	○	○	○	○	○
See live theatre	○	○	○	○	○	○
Visit museums	○	○	○	○	○	○
Visit art galleries	○	○	○	○	○	○
Visit historical sites	○	○	○	○	○	○
Play a musical instrument	○	○	○	○	○	○
Perform music	○	○	○	○	○	○
Compose music	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participate in a sport activity	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch a sporting event	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participate in outdoor pursuits(hiking/camping)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attend classical music concerts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attend popular music concerts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attend a ballet performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Create art	○	○	○	○	○	○
Create crafts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Garden	○	○	○	○	○	○
Go to the library	○	○	○	○	○	○
Read for pleasure	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch TV	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch documentaries	○	○	○	○	○	○
Go to a pub	○	○	○	○	○	○
Go to a nightclub	○	○	○	○	○	○
Play video games	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

4. Musical Activities

Please indicate how often you take part in the following musical activities. Select only one option per question.

*** 1. How often do you...**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Don't Know
Listen to music	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Download music form legal sources	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Download music from illegal sources	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
If you download music, how often do you download albums	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
If you download music, how often do you download single tracks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music to reflect mood	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music to alter mood	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music alone	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music with friends	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music as background to other activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Buy CDs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use an iPod	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use an MP3 player (not iPod)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use a walkman or discman	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use phone to listen to music	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Make mix CDs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Create music playlists on computer	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music on CD player	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to the radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listen to music on computer	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Influenced by friends' musical tastes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music on internet sites like myspace or LastFM	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music from TV (music stations)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music from TV (non music stations)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music from magazines/newspapers	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music from the radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Find new music from boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other (please specify)						

5. Internet Activities

Please indicate how often you do the following activities. Select only one option per question.

*** 1. How often do you...**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Don't Know
Use internet at home	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use internet at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use internet at a library	○	○	○	○	○	○
User internet at other public spaces, like internet cafe	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use email	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use an online messenger service, like MSN or google chat	○	○	○	○	○	○
Read news online	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use the internet to look up information	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use encyclopedic sites, like Wikipedia	○	○	○	○	○	○
Read online forums	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participate in online forums	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use social networking sties, like Facebook or MySpace	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch videos on youtube	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch videos on sites other than youtube	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watch TV/movies online	○	○	○	○	○	○
Play video games online	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

6. iPod/MP3 Player Questions

*** 1. Do you own an iPod or MP3 player?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. iPod/MP3 Player Questions

*** 1. What model of iPod/MP3 player do you have?**

2. How long have you owned it?

*** 3. Please select only one answer per question.**
How often do you...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Don't Know
Use MP3 player/iPod in general	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use MP3 player/iPod while travelling	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use MP3 player/iPod while participating in sports	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use MP3 player/iPod as storage device	○	○	○	○	○	○
Use MP3 player/iPOd plugged into external speakers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Make playlists "on the go"	○	○	○	○	○	○
Make playlists on iTunes	○	○	○	○	○	○
Create playlists for specific activities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Create playlists for specific moods	○	○	○	○	○	○
Change music selection on MP3 player/iPod	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listen to playlist on MP3 player/iPod	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listen to albums in full on MP3 player/iPod	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listen to music on random setting on MP3 player/iPod	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listen to podcasts	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

8. Alternate MP3/iPod questions

1. If you don't own a MP3 player/iPod, why not?

2. Would you like to have one? Why, or why not?

9. Music Taste Selection

1. Please list your 3 favourite musical genres

1.
2.
3.

* 2. Please indicate how often you listen to each musical genre, selecting one answer per question.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Don't Know
Blues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Classic blues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Contemporary blues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Classical	○	○	○	○	○	○
Avant Garde	○	○	○	○	○	○
21st century art music	○	○	○	○	○	○
Baroque	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chamber music	○	○	○	○	○	○
Choral	○	○	○	○	○	○
Early music	○	○	○	○	○	○
Medieval	○	○	○	○	○	○
Minimalism	○	○	○	○	○	○
Orchestral	○	○	○	○	○	○
Renaissance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Opera	○	○	○	○	○	○
Country	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bluegrass	○	○	○	○	○	○
Old country	○	○	○	○	○	○
Contemporary country	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honky-tonk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Garage	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hardcore	○	○	○	○	○	○
House	○	○	○	○	○	○
Drum n bass	○	○	○	○	○	○
Techno	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Easy listening	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lounge	○	○	○	○	○	○
Swing	○	○	○	○	○	○
Electronica	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ambient	○	○	○	○	○	○
Industrial	○	○	○	○	○	○
Folk	○	○	○	○	○	○

Traditional folk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Contemporary folk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Indie folk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hip hop/rap	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hip hop	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gangsta rap	○	○	○	○	○	○
Old school rap (80s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rap	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jazz	○	○	○	○	○	○
Contemporary jazz	○	○	○	○	○	○
Traditional jazz	○	○	○	○	○	○
New Age	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meditative	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pop	○	○	○	○	○	○
Brit pop	○	○	○	○	○	○
Euro pop	○	○	○	○	○	○
Girl groups	○	○	○	○	○	○
Boy bands	○	○	○	○	○	○
Singer/songwriter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Top-40 pop	○	○	○	○	○	○
B&B/soul	○	○	○	○	○	○
R&B	○	○	○	○	○	○
Disco	○	○	○	○	○	○
Doo wop	○	○	○	○	○	○
Funk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motown	○	○	○	○	○	○
Neo-soul	○	○	○	○	○	○
Soul	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reggae	○	○	○	○	○	○
Roots reggae	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dancehall	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dub	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ska	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rock	○	○	○	○	○	○
Blues rock	○	○	○	○	○	○
Death metal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Glam rock	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hair metal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Heavy metal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jam Bands	○	○	○	○	○	○
Progressive rock	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rock and roll	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rockabilly	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rap rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Emo	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Brit rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Classic rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Post-rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Indie rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Country rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Soundtracks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Musicals soundtracks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Non-musicals film soundtracks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
TV soundtracks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Punk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Punk rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
1970s punk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
World	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Religious	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Christian rock	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Christian pop	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Service music	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other religious music	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

APPENDIX III: ONLINE INTERVIEW

Thank you for taking the time to fill out my music survey. Your time and effort so far has been greatly appreciated!

In order to get a more in depth look into how people are using iPods and music in general for my PhD research at the University of Edinburgh, I'm hoping to find people willing to talk about their music and iPod experiences through email. If you can spare a few more minutes to do so, please read on…

I'm trying to create a dialogue on iPod culture and digital music life. Please take some time to share your thoughts on the following statements. Feel free to agree or disagree, the statements are merely starting off points to get people thinking and talking….write as much or as little as you want. And/or if you have anything else you'd like to share about how music or MP3 players function in your life, go for it, there are obviously no right or wrong answers here! Results will, as always, be anonymous.

Age:
Sex:
Location:

1. The internet is a great opportunity for social purposes. Its anonymity allows me to explore aspects of my identity not available in my 'real life'.

2. Knowledge and information are easily available on the internet, but as a society we are becoming less intelligent.

3. I tend to stick to one type of music and I'm heavily influenced by my friends' music preferences.

4. MP3 players and iPods are making people more antisocial. I use my iPod to ignore others and find it rude when people talk to me with their headphones still in.

5. I have an emotional connection with music. It occupies a lot of my time.

6. I only use my iPod when walking to and from work.

7. Anything else you would like to share about your music listening or iPod habits?